

Songs of the Sidhe

by David Ross

Chapter One: Into the Otherworld

Songs of the Sidhe

by David Ross

Development Team: Anthony Buldis, Will Church, Marley Gable, Samuel Peer, David Ross, Ten Vee Kie

Guest Developer (Dragons): Sean Surface

Layout: David Ross

Dicefreaks Logo: Tim Moore

Additional Thanks: Jonathan Bloxsom, Serge W. Desir, Jr., Velson Horie, D. F. Sada, Robert Shaw, and the Dicefreaks community

Poem adapted from "The Economy of Vegetation," a work by Erasmus Darwin, now in the public domain.

The following is an excerpt from The Wanderings of Hisolda the Wild, a tale recorded in the Age of Silence by Roshanara the Glorious:

She knew not how long she was lost. The world and her path were hard to remember, like colorless dreams. She knew only that she now trod through pale mist, not quite as dense as snow, rather than the green grass of the ancient fey mound. Nothing could she see through the fog. Yet, she could still hear.

Through the mist, slowly disappearing like a spring frost at dawn, came a clarion song. Hisolda could not make out words, but it seemed to rhyme, a rhythmic melody cycling and building slight differences with each repetition. At length, she found the fog's edge beside a titanic blackthorn tree atop a low cliff. Beneath her lay the crashing, restless sea. Above her, in the barren boughs of the tree, pixies and ravens chattered amongst themselves and watched the starry sky.

The stars were falling like petals in a breeze. Every measure of the song was punctuated by one of them crashing into the cliffs not far below her, each exploding in a different shade of red or blue. The rock shook eerily, scattering the birds and sprites, as crater blasted atop crater to carve new sea-caves. In the waves before their widening stone maws stood the singer, illuminated by dying light.

A silver-haired old witch of a fey, garbed in shining white, sang a flowing music that seemed unlike any language Hisolda had heard before. Nonetheless, in the back of her mind, she heard the words

*Roll on, ye stars!
Exult in youthful prime!
Mark with bright curves
The printless steps of Time;
Flowers of the sky!
Ye too to age must yield,
Frail as your sisters,
Stars of the field!*

*Star after star
From Heaven's heights shall rush;
Suns sink on suns,
And systems systems crush;
Headlong, extinct,
To one dark center fall,
And Death and Night
And Chaos mingle all!*

*—Till o'er the wreck,
emerging from the storm,
Immortal Nature
Lifts her changeful form,
Mounts from her pyre
On wings of flame,
And soars and shines,
Another and the same.*

When the song ended, a silent dimness prevailed. Hisolda called to the singer, asking for an explanation.

Turning, the fey glanced up at Hisolda. Each eye was a world hung in a glittering tapestry of stars, and acknowledged Hisolda for only a fleeting moment before locking on the withered blackthorn tree. Following the gaze, Hisolda noticed many fruits upon its branches that had not been there before. Each twinkled with a different golden light.

The stranger uttered only a single word before she vanished into the surf and left Hisolda alone—
Birth.

Faerie. A realm among the stars where time is forgotten, and ages pass in the blink of an eye. The Otherworld. A faraway island of bliss. The Spirit World. A dark underworld from whence the first life emerged. The Land of the Living. A vast garden of eternal sunlight. The Land of the Dying. An impossible dreamland beyond world's end, prowled by living nightmares. Countless names, countless nameless legends, yet all are one and the same. Every culture has a different understanding of what Faerie is, and each is right in some way. Perhaps the most common casts the Otherworld as a realm parallel to the mortal world, bridging life and death. Although it can be reached after a short quest or through simple luck, something more is needed to return home. Those that do return are often lost in time, and the less fortunate traveler might find himself

a fey lord's pet or a hag's next meal. The one feature that remains constant among these stories is the fascinating, magical *otherness* of the place. It is at once familiar and exotic. Regardless of culture, age, or race, Faerie rarely fails to captivate anyone who even glimpses its splendor.

The inhabitants of the Otherworld, which include Nature's most venerable and powerful defenders, have proven as mystifying as their home. Depending on what little mortals perceive of them, the fey inspire both dread and longing. These beings are known widely for power both natural and supernatural, though they are sometimes distant and often misunderstood. In most lands, except a few where nature is tamed or ruined, fey are regarded as dangerous aspects of the world itself, and the common folk know they should take the utmost of care when

dealing with these beings. Many a woodland village has a resident—perhaps a knowledgeable old spinster or canny huntsman—who is well-respected for helping his or her neighbors with some insight into the spirits of nature, knowledge of which fey to befriend (such as the brownie), which to be careful of (such as the korred), and which to avoid at all costs (such as the kelpie). Frontier and rural towns ignorant of this wisdom are prone to accidents, curses, disappearances, and eerie deaths.

The common wisdom largely amounts to minor tricks which play on the fixations and desires of the different fey races. Beyond these, most are familiar with tales of the Seelie Court, the Unseelie Court, and the Wild Hunt. The Seelie are known as blessed fairies of light, bounty, and goodness; the Unseelie as lurking evils in the night, murderous sneaks, and dangerous deceivers. While Seelie are often called fair beyond all others, Unseelie are thought misbegotten monsters. The Wild Hunt, a flying host of fey hunters both humanoid and bestial, is renowned as a terrifying force of nature not unlike a tornado: it strikes rarely, with unstoppable lethality, and seemingly at random. All fey are frequently depicted as fantastically fickle and categorically chaotic. However, although these fables are a boon to those touched by the dangers and blessings of Faerie, fables are not literal. They are fanciful fabrications wrapped around mere kernels of truth, and often prove misleading even to those who presume to be wise in the ways of Faerie.

Where the wilds are untamed and deities few, worship of nature is common. Fey and sometimes dragons are regarded as favored children of Mother Nature within these cults. Shamans bargain with them for spells and pay with quests or treasures, while druids study the laws of nature with their aid. Occasionally, they are even worshiped directly. Lesser fey may serve as handmaidens or heralds to true deities, and the archfey are indeed in some ways similar to nature gods. More often, they are considered to be minor gods, less than demigods, worthy of fear and respect but not prayer. Even common fey can manifest a link to the primal magic of the world, from forest to mountain to beast to hearth. Fey with especially potent bonds to nature are frequently referred to as “primal spirits” or simply “spirits” by some societies. Across these and other cultures, many mortals learn to extract the boons of Faerie in exchange for treasure or service. The most prominent of these mortals may join the ranks of the fey themselves by becoming ancestral spirits, Faerie Knights in service to Faerie Lords, or something even stranger.

Unlike the rural expanses and wildernesses that cover most of the material plane, areas of urbanization and advanced technology tend to have residents who think of Faerie as insignificant, little more than a story setting used to delight or frighten the young and the naïve. Similarly, the dominion of exclusivist gods tends to limit the reach

Faerie... The Otherworld... The Spirit World... all are one and the same. Every culture has a different understanding of what Faerie is, and each is right in some way.

of fey. However, Faerie is rarely forgotten entirely. Even in these places, every once in a while, the touch of fey magic, primeval nature, unearthly dragons, or cursed giants will renew the age-old mortal fascination with the Otherworld. Due to numerous factors such as these, the influence of Faerie varies considerably from realm to realm.

Even when they are deeply respected, feared, or adored, the denizens of Faerie are rarely understood among mortals. Ancient traditions, powerful taboos, eldritch laws, varied customs, creative independence, and whimsical emotion can all be found among the fey’s motivations, yet mortals see little more than chaos there. In truth, the Otherworld and its inhabitants are nearly as diverse as the mortal world. Depravity and ugliness lurk among Seelie beauty and bounty, mercy glimmers in the hearts of some Unseelie euthanasists, and the Wild Hunt may inspire druidic wisdom as well as primal frenzy.

Faerie itself is a place of primeval nature. Naturally magical, it is extremely dangerous to the unwary, and both easier and harder to reach than most planar destinations—easier in that paths between the mundane world and Near Faerie are far more numerous than any other kind portal, and harder in that most ways in are hidden, guarded, or require keys. Moreover, travel to and from Faerie is difficult and perilous by any route. Many mortals are famous for having never escaped, instead being adopted permanently (and often unwillingly) into the Faerie world. Some mortal scholars debate whether Faerie is not a separate plane of existence from their own Mortal Coil; druids know that the two are so tightly bound that any separation would be merely superficial.

Songs of the Sidhe tells of Faerie as a place as well as its inhabitants. With common knowledge of Faerie out of the way, we will next see its power players, then its planar traits and geography, and finally the ecology, philosophy, psychology, and tactics of its inhabitants. In later chapters, the magic of the Otherworld will be discussed in detail, as will be the tools of mortals who dare venture into its wilds. Afterwards, we shall learn of the fey, mortals, and other beings that serve and deal with the Powers of Faerie. Beyond that, the nature of supernal status in Faerie and the politics of those who possess it will be described. Finally, the sections on the Faerie Courts will reveal the leadership of a wide array of fey factions, including the Wild Hunt and the Seelie and Unseelie Courts.

Factions of Faerie

The political landscape of Faerie is a complex web of war, alliance, and subtle shades of favor spun by a multitude, all vying to define its nature. The most prominent and influential groups are the Seelie Court, Unseelie Court, and Wild Hunt, but they are not unrivaled. Contending against them are the numerous and fractious Demesne Courts, greedy fomorian kings, noble fírbog chieftains, and a devastating brood of linnorms. In addition to those who seek station and control, there are those Powers such as the Animal Lords who keep to their own devices and are in a position to resist interference from the others.

ANIMAL LORDS

Animal Lords, such as the Wolf Lord and the Bear Lord, are the patron spirits of the various kinds of animal. They are absolutely amoral, and care nothing but for the survival or profit of their kind. Consequently, they rarely enter into long-term arrangements but also rarely shy from useful short-term arrangements with many different Faerie factions that get their species into a better position. They are more likely to ally with the Seelie Court in summer and the Unseelie Court in winter.

The Animal Lords are most at home in Faerie, but have been known to reside in Terra, Concordant Opposition, or the Beastlands as well. The majority of this group avoid dealing with beings outside of their family of animals and perhaps closely-allied fey, but a few have been known to deal with epic mortal heroes. These outgoing Animal Lords must walk a fine line between the world of civilization and wilderness, for to become too entangled in the former can mean utter separation from the latter. Most recently, the Cat Lord fell into the allure of mortal intrigues and epic quests, and eventually lost his station (although he also gained his freedom from its demands). He was replaced by a wild new Cat Lord who shows no affinity for the shiny baubles and storied adventures he relished.

DRAGONS

Although not all dragons of the Otherworld are mighty enough to be movers and shakers, a number are. Arguably the most successful of these is Nathair Sgiathach, patron of the pseudodragons and faerie dragons. The Prince of Nonce, as he is called by some, has proven able to trick even some of the most potent creatures in Faerie and escape unscathed thanks to a jocular brilliance and special mastery of fickle storm and calm, thereby earning a great deal of respect from many mirthful Seelie fey. Despite the esteem he holds among the Seelie Court and with a few other prominent fey, Nathair rarely exerts his influence toward any goal. He is close with several potent specimens of faerie wyrms, but none even begin to encroach on his epic reputation.

Also among the most well-known and powerful dragons in Faerie is Ladon, the stoic and unyielding guardian of the Garden of the Hesperides. Ladon's origins are mysterious, seemingly neither of Io's brood nor of the linnorms he superficially resembles, but he seems devoted to whatever enigmatic instructions have kept him so long watching over his home and its magical apples. Though surprisingly grim given the lovely land he dwells within, Ladon is genial toward those who come in peace and do not molest the land or the golden *Apples of Joy*. Other than Nathair Sgiathach and the Hesperides, he has no significant allies or contacts.

Aside from the well-regarded Ladon and Nathair, Faerie is home to several extremely potent linnorms. Foremost among them is Gottenrvnr Two-Tongues the God-Reaver, greater than all linnorms save for his elder brother Draugr Barrow-Haunt the Corpse-Tearer and their insidious father Nidhoggr. Known for devouring countless divinities over his eternal life, Gottenrvnr is even more notorious in Faerie as a dragon so fearsome and cunning as to give pause to the Two Queens themselves. It was by manipulating the ancient Unseelie King Tethra that he gained the death curse now possessed by all linnorms, a victory which has done much to raise his esteem among the wicked children of the Gnawer of Roots. Always he seeks to move events toward one eventual end: to consume the very root and essence of the Tree of Life. Such an act would make Gottenrvnr one of the most powerful beings in, and most deadly threats to, all Creation.

The God-Reaver keeps a tight leash on his lesser kin by way of brutal intimidation and a keen ability to gauge their inevitable schemes. Gottenrvnr is served by a coterie of lesser but still mighty linnorms, most particularly the potent spellcasters and rune scribes Brgovnar Gold-Scales the Sword Breaker and Lurgvyf Bold-Speaker the Hollow One. His principal enforcer is Ruvokk Anger-Claw the Butcher. However, as far as he might reach, Gottenrvnr and his lieutenants are not the only powerful linnorms in Faerie. Legends record that a mysterious and titanic linnorm once caught even great Borlung by bloody surprise in an earlier age, leading to the Watcher's unexpected death.

The true dragons of Faerie have no real leader or patron, though there are a few that have achieved some fame in certain circles. In Peristan there is the great red wyrm Bennuranace, possessed of a rare mild temper and excellent business acumen, who lords over a great trade empire reaching throughout the Mortal Coil, the Outlands, and with contacts in the Abyss, Ysgard, and Acheron. She trades in spices, incense, salts, alchemical components, unique herbs of Faerie, and occasionally refined drugs and darker wares.

There is also a great brass wyrm known as Wandering Symmone, who moves from realm to realm and lair to lair

seeking a lost associate of his. He believes this individual was kidnapped and brought into the Otherworld, but so addled (or enchanted) has the dragon become in his search that he has forgotten precisely whom he is seeking.

Finally, there is the Green Marquis, a green dragon who dwells among a great tangle of briars and olive groves, an isolated and quiet dragon of reputedly great druidic power.

FAERIE COURTS

The politics of Faerie are diverse, usually quite dangerous, and often hard to comprehend for mortals. At the pinnacle, Faerie Lords and Ladies are godlike Powers whose might reflects aspects of the world around them. They can gain this power directly by mastering a part of their environment, or they can gain it indirectly through the sponsorship of a more powerful Lord.

Although some find a stable neutral position, most of the courts these fey rule are engaged in an intricate dance of alliance and warcraft with each other and outside forces. Many conflicts, especially at the highest levels, are ideological (usually based on different ideas of how the natural order works or should work). However, others are simple power struggles. Feuds with dragon, giant, or magical beast factions are usually for control of territory.

Most prominent of them all, the Two Courts both see themselves as true masters of Faerie and heirs to the power of nature. Each acts as a counterbalance for the other, interfering with each other's plans and perhaps preventing the other from going too far. The cold war between them, fancifully called the *Dance of Light and Darkness* by many fey, has played a role in the climate of conflict between all the other courts for eons. Over the ages, the once-unified Old Seelie Court has fractured into many warring pieces, but every major break has involved the vitriolic dialogue and open war between the Seelie and Unseelie factions.

The Two Courts are divided as much by worldview as by bad blood. The Seelie Court is a culture of vitality, growth, and creativity which bestows life and beauty on all it touches in one way or another; the Unseelie Court is a culture of violence, death, and decadence which inflicts suffering and decay on everyone and everything, eventually.

However, the rift is not absolute. To an extent, the wiser of the Two Courts' members can recognize that their enemy stands for something necessary. Growth must come out of fertile rot and destruction can only come after creation. Too much death leaves nothing behind to continue the cycle; too much life chokes itself out by using up all food and space like a cancer crushing its host. But they will rarely condone the extremes their opposite number goes to. Even a very accepting Seelie is troubled by the amount of blood the Unseelie have spilled, and even the most open-minded Unseelie laments the unsustainable overabundance the Seelie wish to spread.

Most fey courts have rather icy relations with many Powers of the Realms Beyond. They resent the meddling of gods and cosmic entities, although this tension is not often brought to a head after the fey courts withdrew to Faerie during the rise of the modern gods. As an exception, the Seelie Court finds use in friendship with many gods. Indeed, certain factions from the Realms Beyond find fey friends even outside the Seelie Court.

The gods of nature have common ground with many fey and the fey tend to be fairly helpful allies to them, if sometimes only grudgingly. Even then, the majority of gods that ally with fey deal only with a single court. Some cosmic entities also find allies among the fey, including agathions, azatas, demons, night hags, rakshasas, rilmani, titans, and vaati.

Occasionally, a treant, unicorn, druid, hag, or other non-fey creature with strong ties to the court may be permitted to gain membership in a court of Faerie. This is an uncommon honor, but is most frequently offered as a reward for helping a court in a time of great need. The Seelie are particularly reserved about such things, in part due to an old wound. In the time of Queen Aeval, a unicorn Faerie Lord called the King of the Forest fell for the trickery of the arch-devil Lilith and allowed her to gain a foothold on his portfolio. Many Seelie see this loss as evidence that non-fey are not competent enough to rule among them, a notion supported by their belief in the power of heredity. The Unseelie Court in particular scoffs at the Seelie's beliefs, but it is of course still cautious about whom it admits—most non-fey who join nonetheless have a bit of fey blood. Even if a court does not grant full membership to a worthy creature, it may offer some other status, such as knight or observer.

Note that some courts simply defy categorization, and there may be more courts than those described here which are simply not as prominent.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Below are definitions of some common terms in fey politics.

Faerie Friend: This term is used for casual allies of Faerie, often bestowed as easily as carrying out one well-received venture into Faerie.

Knight Bachelor: Ordinary Faerie Knights are generally mortals inured to Faerie. They remain usually in one Faerie Lord's court, but may change allegiances. It is rare for a mortal to be recognized as a Faerie Knight without first spending at least three to seven years in Faerie serving some Otherworldly cause. Faerie Knights and higher-titled beings are considered native to Faerie for purposes of resisting the time distortion imposed by leaving Faerie.

Knight, Order Member: Faerie Knights that please a particular Power or order of knights may be asked to join an order recognizing their achievement. Particularly

well-known orders include the Dark Host (serving the capricious whim of the Queen of Air and Darkness) and the Order of the Lake (led by the Seelie Margravine Vivienne, Chief Lady of the Lake). Most knightly orders have three internal ranks: junior member, median member, and senior member.

Knight Banneret: Knights Banneret are traditionally mortals who have earned great glory in the eyes of the fey. They may be nearing ascension to Faerie Lord status. Generally, a being must have at least 20 HD to become a knight banneret. Like knights bachelor, they need not be sworn to a single liege or court, but many are. Mortal knights banneret are considered fey for the purposes of granting favors to other mortals; for instance, a knight banneret may bestow the Faerie Friend or Nymph's Kiss feats on others. Some knights banneret (such as Morgan Le Fay) even have their own knight bachelor vassals.

Observer: Observers are important figures recognized as closely allied with a court, but not accepted as an actual member of that court. They are of greater prestige and import than Faerie Knights—in fact equivalent to the vassals of the court—but lack practical political power. The True Courts typically bestow this title on non-fey cosmic entities and gods.

True Courts and Worldly Courts: A Worldly Court is a world-specific extension of a True Courts found in Ladinion.

Vassal: A vassal is an aristocratic member of a court. She answers to the ruler of that court and may keep her own smaller court within or beneath the court of her ruler. When a vassal is replaced, her replacement as often as not comes from her personal court.

The Sovereign Courts

There are three Sovereign Courts: the Two Courts and the Watchers of the Current. The Two Courts, the Seelie and Unseelie, are for many purposes the current greatest authorities in Faerie. They are empowered by two primary aspects of nature: growth and decay. The Watchers, best known for their guardianship over the many portals of Faerie, oversee the transitions of nature. The Sovereign Courts once operated in harmony under a single ruler of Faerie, but now a feud divides the Seelie and Unseelie, with the Watchers refusing to take sides. The cause is obscured by rumor, but the most prominent tale places the split immediately after the death of Queen Gloriana. Others insist it happened when Queen Aeval purged the Seelie Court of those she deemed untrustworthy and the Unseelie or “unblessed” expatriats formed their own shadow court. Arguably the most influential of all courts, the Sovereign Courts trace their roots directly back to the Old Seelie Court and Queen Gloriana. Each Sovereign Court counts among its members the rulers of several Blood Courts, Demesne Courts, or similarly important

courts. They act as vassal courts, paying tribute to the Sovereign, gaining her protection, and usually following her will. Other courts swear fealty to multiple courts, making them generally neutral. Still other courts swear fealty to no one, although they may nonetheless serve as proxies for the Seelie and Unseelie as they continue the tense *Dance of Light and Darkness*.

Court Houses

Large courts generally divide into numerous factions. The fey are apt to style these factions as “houses”, which can be thought of as clubs or secret societies within the larger court. Sometimes these houses can extend beyond a single court and form a link to equivalent factions in other courts. Houses may be organized with a single leader, an inner circle that makes decisions, or operate entirely by vote or common consent; it is this leadership that determines membership. House members generally congregate privately in a safe place removed from court, often in the realm of one of the key members. Prominent houses in the Sovereign Courts include the mainstream House of Winter and House of Autumn in the Unseelie Court and the radical House of Amaranth in the Seelie. While Faerie Lords need not be members of any houses to hold or advance their portfolios, the majority belong to one (usually a mainstream one), and some belong to several.

Sometimes, houses that grow distinctive enough from the court or courts they operate within may break away to form their own courts. Long ago, the Wild Hunt began as a house of the Old Seelie Court, and later the Unseelie Court, before becoming an independent faction of considerable power.

The Harbingers of the Undying Season: Now, another house may be about to form another major court. The Harbingers of the Undying Season are members of an old and secretive group of often-reviled fey drawn from both the Seelie and Unseelie Courts. The group originated ages ago with a mysterious figure known as Yan-An-Od, the Grey Shepherd. His controversial ideas led to his execution by the Unseelie King Tethra, and since then the Harbingers have carefully guarded their intentions. They took refuge in the fringes of the Two Courts, and now operate for the most part in the deepest shadows of Faerie. The Harbingers now share many members with the Seelie House of Amaranth, who seek to spread longevity and extend youth, and the Unseelie House of Stormwind, who desire to use all destructive forces to their utmost grisly potential.

According to the leaders of this movement, the current natural order of life and death should be replaced by pure stasis (which they call the Undying Season) utterly bereft of either. Toward this end, the group spreads undeath, and occasionally other forms of immortality, in the belief

that they will eventually transform the whole Mortal Coil. Most fey outside of this faction hate and fear most undead, destroying them on sight; they naturally despise the Harbingers.

Not long ago, a few of the movement's leaders were again exposed for what they were in the Unseelie Court. Those who did not escape were executed by the Queen of Air and Darkness. The Unseelie leadership have begun to speak of Seelie sedition sparking these fey to defy the will of their Queen, but they have thus far taken pains to keep the lower members of the court and especially their Seelie enemies from learning about the Harbingers' reappearance.

Led by visions she believes came from Nature herself, a young fey named Regantia has taken control of the scattered Harbingers and begun calling herself the Queen of Frozen Twilight. She holds supernal power despite her opposition to the Two Courts, and her followers believe that this signifies her right to oppose and supplant them. She has begun organizing a group in the Badlands of Annwn, where she may soon announce the Harbingers as a new faerie court.

Courtly Titles

The incredibly numerous titles of faerie courtiers are often hard to keep track of and compare, even for those deeply embroiled in Otherworldly politics. Simply put, the fey and their fellow aristocrats have never established a well-defined structure for courtly titles. Nonetheless, many courts follow the relative order of titles used by the Seelie and Unseelie Courts, said to be based on the titles used by the Old Seelie Court with influences from Hellish, vaati, genie, and even mortal hierarchies. In this view, all fey are broken into five major categories: commoners, gentry, nobility, royalty, and a subgroup of royals called Faerie Lords.

These broad categories reflect a relative scale which varies from court to court and world to world. A fey who styles herself a queen may be inferior in every way to a countess of another court. Often, the hierarchies of lesser courts lack some of the higher titles altogether. Even fey who shun the frivolous structures of the Faerie Courts are usually categorized by other fey into one of these groupings anyway.

Commoners: Politically insignificant fey, such as redcaps, pixies, and lesser fey, are regarded as commoners. They are paid little heed by the aristocracy, despite often idolizing the aristocrats. Nevertheless, they remain consistently more dangerous than any ordinary mortal.

Gentry: Local-level figures with courts and servants normally numbering fewer than two dozen fey, the gentry are the most numerous and most commonly encountered of all fey aristocrats.

Yeomen, often simply styled "master," are the lesser

gentry and include such fey as nymphs.

Their typical superiors, the churls or baronetesses, claim many dozens of square miles. The most commonly seen fey among greater gentry is the daoine sidhe.

Nobility: Standing above the gentry but beneath the royals, nobles generally have influence over land and minions to rival mortal fiefdoms or even nations. Their power and closeness with the forces of nature sometimes results in these fey being revered as minor nature gods by common mortals.

Minor nobles, such as baronesses, bans, and beys, have realms covering hundreds of square miles and average about the power of a zephyr.

Viscountesses and holds, slightly higher, rival high-level heroes and often challenge phoenixes and linnorms as equals.

The greatest nobles--gesiths, countesses, and wild hunters--often have range over several thousand square miles and usually verge on power of truly epic proportions.

Royalty: The royals are the main movers and shakers of Faerie, many of them rivaling demigods in authority and raw power, although they often lack supernal power. Those royals who do manifest supernal power are known as Faerie Lords.

Even typical royalty, margravines and emiras, can as often as not deal with solars as equals, and at the least rival major mortal monarchs and epic heroes in their reach over tens of thousands of square miles.

Thanes, highreeves, and duchesses, the next step up, are at least as far-reaching as mortal empires, influencing hundreds of thousands of square miles.

Finally, princesses, archduchesses, and mormaers of even the least significance always exhibit at least a measure of epic prowess; with or without supernal stature, they may have power over up to a million or more square miles.

Faerie Lords: The greatest of fey royalty are primal Powers collectively called Faerie Lords or archfey. These beings have deific might and some have small cults, but they do not rely on worship as gods generally do. A few actively resist worship out of fear it could lead to distraction from their primary interests.

Some Faerie Lords can be conjured somewhat like archfiends, but in most cases, a mortal who seeks an audience can only request an archfey's presence. The fey is not guaranteed to reply, least of all in a particular manner, so the mortal may have to seek the archfey out in person.

Powerful margravines and emiras have influence over at least a minor aspect of life and death and may rival powerful demigods.

Greater thanes, highreeves, electresses, and duchesses have some talent at manipulating at least a small shard of growth, decay, time, or space such as family, fear, hunger, imagination, poison, portals, and sleep, and may threaten some lesser deities.

Most princesses, archduchesses, and mormaers command some significant fragment of nature, such as affinity, decomposition, fertility, sterility, or violence. They sometimes best intermediate gods.

Grand duchesses, queens, and khedives almost universally have at least a little primal power, and sometimes compare favorably to even the mightiest of intermediate deities. These beings have influence over a major component of the Mortal Coil's essence, such as extinction, growth, pleasure, space, and suffering, and may affect up an entire world at once.

High queens, greatest of all, are at least demipowers and may even rival pantheon heads. Broadly speaking, each is a mistress of life, death, time, synthesis, or some other ultimate fundamental of the world. They are as a rule untouchable by mortals except in special circumstances.

THE TRUE COURTS

The True Courts of Ladinion are often much more distant from mortal concerns than the worldly courts, but this is not always the case. The reasons for their distance are manifold; limited resources, non-aggression pacts with gods, Deus Fields or overpowers that restrict a world's interaction with Ladinion, and more can all play a role.

Sometimes, however, one or more True Courts choose to focus on a particular world. It may be that there are not worldly courts, but the world holds something pivotal to the wider Mortal Coil. It may be that the world's limitations on interlopers are weak enough to let the True Courts access it to a greater extent, and they are simply taking advantage of an opening in Terra and/or Annwn. Whatever the reason, when a True Court takes a direct interest in a world, it generally has significant numbers of mortal and fey servants (knights, cultists, etc) present while the True Courtiers themselves intervene only rarely.

Blood Courts

Any given race of fey typically has a True Court in Ladinion which is its nominal representative. For the most part, only the more lawful fey actually seek or care about meaningful rule from their far-off Blood Court. Other fey tend to respect the rulers of their race's court, but rarely (if ever) look to them for guidance. In some cases, these courts are little more than groups of powerful fey congregating around the most famous (or infamous) fey of a given type, and their influence on their race amounts to little more than inspiring occasional stories, conversation, and gossip. Blood Courts are often the groups most directly subject to the power plays between the Two Courts.

The rules for gaining power in each of the Blood Courts depends upon what is important to that race, so that the ruler of each Blood Court best exemplifies what that race cares about. For instance, the most bloodthirsty redcap is king in their court, and the most beautiful rule among

the huldra. Daoine sidhe lack any semblance of a Blood Court, perhaps because their race specializes in living the life of politics, ruling and participating in many of the courts of Faerie and especially dominating the Two Courts. Amadans and other extremely solitary races also lack a Blood Court.

Demesne Courts

These courts seek to maintain their favored environment and encourage its spread. There is one for each climate/terrain combination from the following: cold, temperate, warm; forest, marsh, hills, mountain, desert, plains, waterways, lakes (freshwater), seas (saltwater), shores. There is also a Court of Caverns (encompassing all subterranean environments), a Court of Winds (for the atmosphere), a Court of Tides (for currents and tides in all aquatic environments), and a Court of Burning Earth (for geothermal vents and the deep, hot bowels of the earth). All told, there are 34 Demesne Courts, but they are especially prone to merging temporarily, and so at any given time there are fewer than half that many separate courts. The majority are independent of the Sovereign Courts, but the Courts of Tides, Winds, and the Burning Earth answer to the Watchers of the Current and the Court of Rivers swears fealty to the Seelie Court.

At present, there is a Court of the Frostfell (cold forest, marsh, hills, desert, plains, lakes, and shores), Rivers (all waterways), Winds, Caverns, Peaks (all mountains), the Wood (temperate forest), Coral (all seas and temperate and warm shores), and the Jungle (warm forest), among others. Perhaps the most dynamic of Faerie Courts, the Demesne Courts constantly fight over land with each other, with other courts, and with non-fey rulers such as fomorians and linnorms. The most visible are the Courts of Wind, Rivers, Coral, and the Frostfell. The Frostfell is ruled by the calculating, well-established, and ruthless Snow Queen, whose chief rival is the morose and young but terrifyingly powerful Siobhan Alastal of the Court of Coral. The Court of Rivers is represented by the sociable Seelie vassal Always Falling. Finally, the Court of Winds is ruled by the accommodating King Aeolus.

Minor Courts

Most Faerie Lords have their own personal courts.

Perhaps the most well-known independent archfey in Ladinion are the Princes of Passion and the Gatekeepers of Essence, who draw power from the Mortal Coil's interaction with other planes.

Each Prince of Passion manifests the power of one alignment for either the betterment of Nature or enhancing his own personal influence, and generally operates independently of (or at cross-purposes with) his fellow Princes of Passion.

Conversely, the Gatekeepers of Essence are concerned

with elemental vortexes and other ways that the Elemental Realities affect material nature. They tend to cooperate more than the Princes of Passion, and often serve as go-betweens for elemental lords and the masters of Faerie.

Both the Princes and the Gatekeepers tend to attract a number of peris, outsiders reborn as fey. Although neither group answers to them, the majority of these archfey are on good terms with Queen Titania and the Watchers of the Current, especially Borlung, Fate Weaver, and Bhalyoi.

The Seelie Court

The Seelie Court idealizes bounty. They develop and demonstrate their power by helping the world around them to grow, flourish, and improve. They protect life from premature or wasteful death, and encourage rebirth afterward. The most devoted Seelie, especially the courtiers, are associated with positive energy and tend to avoid destructive acts of all kinds. They usually banish, transmute, or befuddle enemies instead of killing them.

The Court's chief goal is to unite Faerie and all of nature under their banner of life, recreating the lost glory of the Faerie Court. Although the Seelie see themselves as the true heirs of Queen Gloriana, the last queen of a united Faerie Court (even calling their Queen Titania the Faerie Queen), few outside the court recognize their claim. Major obstacles to their recognition are the rival claim of the Unseelie Court, who hold the Queen of Air and Darkness to be the prime heiress of Gloriana's power, and the other courts' fear that an unchecked Seelie Court might overwhelm them all with cancerous growth.

The Seelie have a touch of perfectionism to them, and are less willing to admit those not of full fey blood. They put a lot of weight in potential and bloodline – they are known to manipulate these things in order to get what they want. For example, a Seelie may appear to a young child of great potential and bless him or save him from harm, making him indebted to her from an early age.

The majority of the Court seeks harmony among fey and mortals and other planes, but vocal minorities hold different goals. Some few in the House of Spring call for all-out war with the Unseelie Court. Some (generally of the House of Summer) favor cutting mortals off from their goodwill and/or fighting to rid the Mortal Coil of outside influence. An isolationist minority distrusts extraplanars and mortals and wishes to avoid involvement with matters outside Faerie.

Well-known servants of the court include the Order of the Lake, who channel Seelie blessings to those who properly respect their land, and the Order of Sowers, who deliver unborn souls. The Sowers carry fresh souls from Paradwys in Ladinion to the places where they will be born. Usually, these fey just guide the natural process for animals, fey, plants, and vermin, but occasionally they work with mortal souls as well. The largest groups of Seelie

servants represent the Houses of Spring and Summer, who coordinate the shifting of their respective seasons.

The True Seelie Court is ruled by Titania, the motherly but perfectionistic Queen of Light, and her noble but tempestuous consort King Oberon. Their most important vassals are Adekagagwaa, the stern and reserved Summer Chief; playful and gentle Ruona Neida, Grand Duchess of Spring; and beneficent Talitu, the Faerie Godmother, renowned protectress of mothers and children.

The courtiers of the Seelie Court range in power from inferior to most demigods to competing with greater deities. Each member concerns himself with creation of and by nature in a different manner, and all ultimately answer to their Sovereign. In turn, Titania has some power over every one of her vassals' portfolios (in addition to interests which are exclusively hers). The Sovereign Court vassals all have various knights or other servants, and many have personal courts composed of lesser nobles that deal with various aspects of the ruling Power's portfolio.

Like most large political bodies, the True Seelie Court includes within it several major factions. Many are organized into houses: The House of Spring, the more liberal mainstream faction; the House of Summer, the bare majority who holds conservative views and disdains mortals as beneath them; the House of Celadine, a group (often looked down upon) whose members seek to help mortals for the mutual benefit of mortals and fey under the guidance of Princess Talitu; the House of Worms is a secret group led by Margrave Touka whose members seek to integrate aberrations into nature; and the House of Amaranth seeks to stifle the power of death as much as possible.

The Unseelie Court

The Unseelie Court epitomizes loss. As it brings death and destruction, this court is associated with negative energy. The Unseelie draw power from filling nature with suffering, destruction, and rot. In turn, an Unseelie fey only truly respects power that is demonstrated by hurting, weakening, or killing another. Relative to the Seelie, it is much easier for a non-fey to earn respect this way. Although the Unseelie tend to see all things as predictable (even moreso than other fey) and are renowned for their fatalism and prophecy, they make their predictions based on demonstrated ability and how a situation compares to similar ones in the past rather than focusing on mere possibilities and the vagaries of heredity.

In general, the Unseelie are not as restrictive as the Seelie, and are more willing to admit those not of full fey blood. This may be necessary to maintain their numbers, due to the fact that Unseelie courtiers and their most fervent followers tend to avoid creative acts of any kind. They are also known to steal and transform others' young in order to multiply.

Many of the Unseelie oppose extraplanar success in the Fleeting Realm as invasive or unnatural. A small but vocal minority, usually members of the aforementioned group, considers everything outside Faerie to be tainted with the unnatural and wishes to destroy it all—typically starting with all mortals. A number of Unseelie expect an attack from the Seelie at any time and urge a preemptive strike. The Harbingers of the Undying Season are a small but constant influence on the Unseelie through the House of Stormwind, urging the court's members to abandon their arbitrary taboos against various vile tactics.

The Unseelie Court is served by many different groups. Perhaps the most important serve the Houses of Autumn and Winter, who maintain the cycle of seasons. The most feared Unseelie, however, are those who serve the Queen of Air and Darkness as her elite knights in the Dark Host. Another important group is the Order of Harvesters. The Harvesters escort dead souls from where they fell to Paradwys in the heart of the Tree of Life, where they are returned to nature. Their typical charges are plants, animals, magical beasts, and fey, but they are also known to snatch up mortal souls from time to time.

The True Unseelie Court is ruled by the Queen of Air and Darkness, an unpredictable figure known for her callous wit and ruthlessness. Her widely-feared elite servants are the bloody and mysterious Dark Host. Other prominent Unseelie leaders include Nirrta, the wistful Raja of Autumn; depraved Asketi, Grand Duchess of Winter; and Baba Yaga, the wandering Archduchess of Death, notorious for her vicious cunning, dark wisdom, and inviolable taboos.

The Queen of Air and Darkness rules a court system in many ways a dark reflection of Titania's. Her servants vary greatly in power and her reach extends far and wide both within and beyond the Unseelie Court itself.

Major court houses of the Unseelie include: the House of Autumn, the liberal mainstream faction now waxing in power; the House of Winter, the main conservative faction; the tiny fringe House of Stormwind, concerned with harnessing every possible resource toward Unseelie goals (even questionable ones); and the House of Ashes, perhaps the most extreme, invested in ending all Creation so that the cycle of history can begin anew.

The Watchers of the Current (Court of the Fleeting Moment)

The Court of the Fleeting Moment, whose members are more commonly called the Watchers of the Current or simply Watchers, is best known for guarding the portal system of Faerie. This system, also known as the Rivers of Time, is linked strongly to the shape of space and time itself. From the starry heavens above which carry echoes of both future and past, to the ley lines underfoot which shape and are shaped by the earth and sea and sky, space and

time form the frame within which life and death transpire. Many fey refer to this frame as the Fleeting Moment, or simply the Current. The Watchers of the Current wield some influence over all these aspects of nature.

While of grave importance to Faerie, the Watchers have little direct power. They may influence events by reshaping the scenery within which the action takes place, but they are rarely the actors. On the sidelines of the Two Courts' conflict, the Watchers sometimes try to play the voice of reason to the other courts, but because their admonition is usually for moderation and restraint of rival courts, they are rarely listened to. Many a leader is too wary of treachery or too certain that she is right to listen to the enigmatic Court of the Fleeting Moment. Other fey leaders all too easily recall the *Peace of Paradwys*, the Watchers' attempt to administer all the Demesnes and Blood Courts which ended in war and disaster. This one grave misfortune always threatens to undermine the Watchers' credibility.

The Watchers of the Current are led by the wise and generally passive Borlung, King of Eventide and guardian of time. His chief lieutenant is the coldly logical and inquisitive Ifadoval, Watcher of Dimensions and protector of space. Below them, a small collection of vassals each chiefly watch over one basic aspect of mortal reality; taken together, these portfolios constitute Borlung's sphere of influence, all space and time.

Faerie is a complex web of war, alliance, and subtle shades of favor spun by a multitude, all vying to define its nature.

The Wild Hunt

The most famous, and possibly the most powerful, of all forces in Faerie aside from the Two Courts is the Wild Hunt. Everyone knows that the Hunt patrons hunting, but it subtly reaches all aspects of living and dying in harmony with nature. Its members hold that all alignments, elements, and energies are but aspects of a greater whole.

Many Faerie Lords retain guards or even small armies, but no organized force matches the Wild Hunt. Indeed, the Wild Hunt's great (though little-used) political influence lies primarily in its martial prowess. Consequently, many courts attempt to curry favor with the Wild Hunt and direct it against their enemies. Aside from the temporal and spatial isolation of Faerie, the Wild Hunt is its greatest defense against invasion.

The Leader of the Wild Hunt is Cernunnos, who speaks little and acts with devastating power respected even by the Two Queens. Other notables include Hellekin, creative and fiery Hunter of Spirits; Mother Goden, the mercenary

Huntress of Faeries; and Kvaternica, Huntress of Mortals and teacher of witches. The focus of the Hunt on simple wisdom and strength leaves little room for the politicking and bickering which plague so many other Courts.

WORLDLY COURTS

World-specific Faerie Courts are largely analogous to various True Courts, but their specific situations usually differ significantly based on the conditions of the mortal world. The variation in courts from world to world is similar in scope to the variation between divine pantheons. Depending on the limitations of the world, worldly archfey may reside in Terra or alongside it in Annwn.

In general, worldly courts fall into one of three different scales of power:

- When fey are at their strongest, they operate on the same level of power as gods, and a court can rival a pantheon. Historically, these fey courts either never fought with gods, fought them to a standstill, or even outright defeated the gods. They generally play roles similar to those of gods and greater archfiends or archcelestials on a world stage—heroes may battle for or against the symbols of such beings, but can rarely them challenge directly.
- When fey have a more typical presence, they often stand somewhere between gods and mortals in the grand scheme of things. They might even be directly subordinate to nature gods, bound or created to serve. Alternatively, the fey may stand apart from the gods and simply concern themselves with their own devices. Finally, they may lash out against the gods, too weak to unseat them presently but dangerous enough to pose a long-term threat. These fey are often just within the reach of exceptional mortals to challenge or champion personally.
- When fey are weak, worldly courts usually represent challenges of a similar scale to the heroes and villains of legend. Historically, these tend to be fey courts that arose in a manner similar to mortal civilizations or which were long ago badly defeated by gods and never recovered. These courts often wield influence similar to parallel-realm nations in terms of scope and scale.

The Seelie, Unseelie, and Demesne Courts are the most active sponsors of worldly courts, but there are also numerous worldly Wild Hunts, Blood Courts, and Watchers of the Current.

LOCAL COURTS

The smallest and most plentiful kind of court is the local court. An ordinary nymph in the Fleeing Realms would usually deal directly with a local court. Most fey aristocrats

have a region of influence over which they serve as local lord even if they care little for such concerns (in which case they are likely to delegate its oversight to a majordomo).

A local court is usually where the fey of any region can meet. Such a court may rule a region as small as a hundred acres or as large as an ocean. Often these courts pay much more attention to the Annwn version of a region, but in any case they claim the same stretch of land in both Annwn and the Fleeing Realm since the two are so intimately linked. A given local court ruler might hold its position at the pleasure of a higher court or may be independent; sometimes, one has several superiors to deal with.

For instance, the nereid mistress of an inland sea might want to flood nearby swamps and permanently increase the size of her sea. She would be supported in her endeavor by that world's Lord of Lakes, opposed by its Seelie ruler (because the flooding would kill all the swamp life), and supported by its Unseelie ruler (for the same reason). The Lord of the Burning Earth might offer the help of using an earthquake to alter the elevation of the swamp. She could accept aid from any, but would be helped without a price. Finally, she might have to fight the patron spirit of the swamp, if there is one.

There are local courts in Ladinion as well as Annwn and Terra, but their petty members are usually little-known because they are overshadowed by the exceptionally powerful True Courts that also dwell in Ladinion.

Sometimes, multiple local courts rule the same territory. This usually happens when a region's fey are polarized by the Seelie-Unseelie conflict into splitting a single local court in two, though sometimes the split follows other lines. A known tactic in conflicts between Demesne Courts is for an invading court to patron a new local court in a region already bound to another Demesne Court in an attempt to gain influence to change the environment toward their own portfolio.

GIANT KINGDOMS

The chief giant kings of Faerie, who rule nations of fomorians and firbolgs, are among its most territorial power players. Many of them constantly war with each other, archfey (primarily of the Demesne Courts), and other groups to claim land, resources, and influence. Fomorians, true to their violent, paranoid natures, tend to be isolated politically, though they sometimes make alliances of convenience with other fomorians or Unseelie fey. Firbolgs, on the other hand, tend to deal well with other groups, especially the Wild Hunt but also a variety of Demesne Courts and other fey.

Affwys

Affwys is a kingdom centered on the ancient fortress of Tir Andomhain, now ruled largely by the mighty fomorian queen Inciona. Now the nation built by Inciona covers

most of Andomhain and spreads far into the surrounding caves and sea realms.

Among the most powerful fomorians in Faerie, Inciona is famously greedy and hordes all the sparse resources and dark secrets she has found in Andomhain. Although she is willing to expend resources when necessary, she tends to be overcautious. Her brother Math is her majordomo. She is currently in negotiations with the Queen of Air and Darkness's envoy regarding a potential alliance; simultaneously, she fights off the forces of the Court of Coral and Court of Caverns who are unhappy with her expansion into their territories.

Anghar

Anghar is one of the largest fomorian kingdoms in Faerie, spanning countless plains, shorelines, and ocean expanses in addition to a smaller smattering of other domains. Its ruler, Brasil, is often at war with the Court of Coral, the Court of the Frostfell, and sometimes courts concerned with plains. Its capital is a wandering tower on the island of Hybrasil.

Brasil is a power-hungry and paranoid creature, obsessed with extending his reach and making sure that no one can threaten his authority. He commands a large army of lesser fomorians kept in line by fear of him. His sister Eithne helped him build his empire, but eventually he gave in to vile paranoia and violated her such that she has forever abandoned him.

Siar

One of the greatest kingdoms of the firbolg race in Faerie is Siar, ruled by a pair of firbolg kings blessed with the honor of riding with the Wild Hunt. Legend says this land was won from the Wild Hunt in ages past, in a display of might and courage that earned the firbolg race the undying respect of the great fey huntsmen. In addition to the Wild Hunt, Siar also deals well with the Demesne Courts.

The Thousandflame Coalition

The Thousandflame Coalition unites dozens of fomorian warlords under the crafty guidance of Arca Dubh. Although mighty, Arca Dubh is not the most powerful of the member warlords. The coalition spans all sorts of environments, but has the largest claims on plains, rivers, and shores.

Arca Dubh micromanages much of his holdings through informants and magic items, organizing his lands and their peoples for maximum efficiency. However, this strategy sometimes leads to dangerous resentment and rebellion from his vassals, requiring he spend energy keeping them in line. Additionally, he sometimes accidentally ruins a land by getting rid of something he deems superfluous but which turn out to be an ecological linchpin. The rest of the coalition must deal with his spies and spellcasting

servants constantly monitoring their loyalty, but they are grudgingly willing to do it because his leadership provides them safety from the more powerful Demesne Courts.

The coalition is allied with a few lawful Seelie, but conflicts with most Demesne Courts. Arca Dubh sometimes attempts to appease the Court of Deserts to prevent them from attempting to conquer land he ruins.

Giant Mercenaries

Some fomorians do not bother attempting to establish grand realms for themselves. Instead, they sell their services to the highest bidder and use their wealth to establish smaller but more lavish and secure domains. Prominent fomorian mercenaries include Nairna, a powerful witch known for her cruelly enchanted ironwork and the fire and smog that billows for miles around her forge, and Eithne, a ruthless wizard. Eithne is more than willing to sell the secrets of loopholes in Faerie's time and space regardless of any risk to the fabric of time and space itself; rumor has it Borlung has recently put a bounty on her head as a result.

MAGICAL BEAST POWERS

Literally or figuratively, most magical beast powers are simply very potent monsters, with their own personal goals and rivalries, and they interact with the races they represent only very loosely. As such, these beings are rarely worshiped by anyone. Though they may consider their race to be their spawn, they are generally distant and permissive parents.

Patrons of the unicorns, pegasi, giant eagles, thunderbirds, ki-rin, and other magical beasts reside in Faerie, but they tend to deal more with cosmic entities than with other primal powers. They usually associate only in passing with archfey aside from the Princes of Passion, but sometimes ally with specific Blood Courts, the Seelie Court, or the Unseelie Court.

PLANT POWERS

Although there are countless plants in Faerie, there are few plant Powers. Most plants either evolved on their own or were created by non-plant Powers. The exceptions are generally the most intelligent plants, such as myconids and treants.

As a result, plants are rarely intelligent enough for worship, much less inclined to it, although myconids and treants revere their patrons as great exemplars worth imitating. The distinct majority are like Psilofyr, patron of the myconids, who usually avoids the politics of those outside his fungoid realm. On the other hand, among the most powerful plant Powers is Emmantiensien, patron of the treants, who is a prominent courtier among the fey and wields the power of a True Seelie Archduke over memory and preservation.

Otherworldly Geography

Faerie is a place of nature unbound. Its inhabitants are often aloof and apart from the squabbling that goes on in the wider cosmos.

Mortals generally dwell upon Terra, the first layer of the plane known as the Mortal Coil or Material Plane. The two other layers below Terra are collectively known as "Faerie." These two layers are Annwn ("anoon", also called the Otherworld or Near Faerie) and Ladinion (also called the True Otherworld or Deep Faerie). Terra, the relatively mundane realm of mortals, is often called the Fleeting Realm by fey because time passes away much faster there than in Annwn or Ladinion. In the past, some have mistakenly called Faerie a separate plane or a specific world within Terra.

Faerie Planar Traits

Annwn and Ladinion share the following traits.

- **Light Gravity:** Characters suffer a -2 circumstance penalty on attacks and Balance, Ride, Swim, and Tumble checks; they gain a +2 circumstance bonus on Climb and Jump checks. All weights are halved. Weapon ranges double. Damage dice from falling is reduced from d6 to d4.
- **Erratic Time:** Time in Faerie generally passes notably slower than in Terra. The ratio between mundane time and faerie time is often thought to be 1 day = 1 week for Annwn and 1 hour = 2 weeks for Ladinion, but there is considerable evidence that both ratios are (or once were) different in some places.
- **Infinite Size:** At the very least, the layers of Faerie are each as large as Terra.
- **Alterable Morphic.**
- **No Elemental or Energy Traits:** Sections of each layer may have the minor positive-dominant or minor negative-dominant trait, but Faerie as a whole does not.
- **Enhanced Magic:** Faerie is highly magical, and all arcane and nature-based divine (druid, ranger, etc) spells cast here are at +2 caster level.

Annwn has the following additional traits:

- **Impeded Magic:** Teleportation across ranges larger than 3 miles and all calling effects are impeded by the temporal storm and fail unless the caster succeeds at a caster level check (DC 15 + spell level). Successful spells are still subject to distortion; see the sidebar **Spacetime Distortion** on the next page for more information. Those who succeed on their check realize that there is a chance of the spell being lost in time and space and may choose to cancel the spellcasting without expending the spell slot (though the casting time is still wasted). Those who succeed on the check by 15 or more can choose to take either the less or more distorted of two possible results for time distortion and space distortion without learning what those distortions are beforehand. For example, a distortion of 1 minute, 1 round, 0 feet, and 75 feet would be 1 round and 0 feet distorted if "less distorted" was chosen. This impediment also affects spells attempting to cross planar boundaries into or out of Annwn.

Ladinion has the following additional traits:

- **Impeded Magic:** As Annwn's property, but teleportation is only unhindered out to 300 feet and the Spellcraft DC is 30 + spell level.
- **Entrapping:** Any non-native that eats or drinks anything from Ladinion, or takes anything from the place, must make a Will saving throw at the next sunrise (DC 10 + number of consecutive days spent in Ladinion) and again at sunrise each day that he remains in Ladinion thereafter. If he fails any save, the visitor has become enspelled by the magic of Faerie and cannot leave of his own free will. Moreover, all aspects of the mortal world seem insignificant, crude, and disgusting to him. If he has already left Ladinion, or if he is forcibly removed from there, he begins to waste away and suffers 1d4 points each of Constitution and Wisdom drain per week. The drain vanishes if the victim returns

The Tree of Life

Most fey agree with the general principle of cosmology known as the Tree of Life, though its details vary. The Tree of Life is the hub of Creation – its roots are Ladinion, its trunk is Annwn, and its leaves are the myriad worlds of the Fleeting Realm. The leaves grow, age, and die quickly when compared to the Tree's roots, and this is reflected by the way time generally passes slower inside Faerie than outside it.

Like most sane beings, the fey understand the Void Beyond to be a horrific space outside of proper reality. However, in their worldview nothing can truly be outside of nature, so at the same time they also try to find a function for it. Fey legends claim that the destroyed remains of the previous multiverse, the Loam in which the Tree of Life is growing, was once located in the Void Beyond.

SPACETIME DISTORTION

When an adventurer stumbles into the distorted time and space of Faerie, unexpected things are bound to happen. Although a table is provided here to randomly determine how distorted time is in Faerie relative to Terra, it is important for a GM to consider the consequences of a severe time distortion. If a campaign's whole direction may be altered by a roll of the die, it is recommended that the GM choose an appropriate result instead of simply rolling.

Portals: Most portals into and out of Faerie have no risk of distortion in space and distort time by a fixed amount when it is used to exit Faerie. It is recommended that the GM choose a distortion from the table **Random Time Distortion by Planar Layer**, but if desired, the time distortion can be randomly determined by rolling on the column for the layer of departure.

Spells: If impeded magic is successfully cast in Faerie (see **Faerie Planar Traits**), the spell is nevertheless distorted by passing through the temporal storm. To determine distortion in space, roll 1d8, treating 1 as north, 2 as northeast, 3 as east, and so on clockwise. In Annwn, the target appears 1d100-25 (minimum 0) feet off target the indicated direction. In Ladinion, the spell is instead 5d20-5 (minimum 0) miles off target. If the spell was already arriving somewhere other than the intended location, such as by a off target *teleport* spell, apply both modifiers to get the destination. To determine distortion in time, roll on the table **Random Time Distortion by Planar Layer**. If the target is departing Faerie, convert the amount of time it has spent in Faerie from faerie

time to mortal time according to the distortion rolled. Otherwise, the target arrives an amount of time later equal to that distortion's "Mortal Time" entry.

Random Time Distortion by Planar Layer

— Roll d% —		— Distortion —		
Annwn	Ladinion	Distortion Strength	Mortal Time	Faerie Time
01	01–03	Major	1 round	= 6d10d10 days
02–03	04–11	Strong	1 round	= 1d4 days
04–08	12–30	Moderate	1d8+2 rounds	= 1 day
09–28	31–38	Mild	3d20 minutes	= 1 day
27–38	—	Faint	1d20+1 hours	= 1 day
37–48	—	None	1 day	= 1 day
47–58	—	Faint	1d6 days	= 1 day
59–82	39–45	Mild	1d4 weeks	= 1 day
83–94	46–87	Moderate	1d10 months	= 1 day
95–98	88–95	Strong	1d8 years	= 1 day
99–00	96–00	Major	10d10 years	= 1 day

to Ladinion but reappears if he leaves. A *wish* or *miracle* is required to break this curse.

Planar Links

Faerie is coterminous with the Sea of Thought and the Land of Dreams (also known as the Astral Plane and Ethereal Plane, respectively). Since Faerie does not border the Demiplane of Shadow, shadow spells cast here must draw from the Land of Dreams itself, and so they tend to take on a more whimsical quality than usual. Note that Faerie's traits impede some conjurations, and even those that succeed are usually distorted by the temporal eddy around Faerie (see **Faerie Planar Traits**, previous page).

Time in Annwn passes at approximately one-third to one-eighth the rate of time in Terra, while time in Ladinion passes at approximately one-twentieth the speed of mundane time or slower. For example, if 1 day = 1 week in Annwn, then a traveler who spends 1 day in Annwn and *scries* upon his fellows in Terra could see that it has been an entire week from their perspective, although they may not seem to be moving faster while he watches.

When leaving the Otherworld, time can be twisted so that the trip takes longer or shorter outside than it did inside. So, the traveler who spent a day in Annwn may cease his spellcasting and step through a portal to Terra and find that his fellows there have seen merely an hour pass, a week, a whole month, or also a day. The rate of distortion varies from portal to portal. Distortion between Ladinion and Annwn usually matches the rate of time's passage (so if 1 day = 1 week in Annwn and 1 hour = 2 weeks in Ladinion, a week passing in Ladinion equates to half a mortal hour passing or 3.5 Annwn hours passing). Travel by means other than a portal produces a seemingly random time distortion depending on the layer the traveler departs from or enters (GM's choice) unless the means are specifically designed to work in Faerie (such as a spirit shaman's spirit journey or a phooka's wild ride). Entering the Otherworld via spell also produces a similar effect; see the sidebar **Spacetime Distortion**, above, for details.

If 1 day had passed for the aforementioned traveler when he entered his portal, a portal with a time distortion of 1 hour = 1 day would make it appear to him that a day

Minimum Time Distortion by Portal Strength

— Distortion —

Distortion Strength	Mortal Time	Faerie Time	Will DC to Resist Distortion
Major	1 second	= 1 day	25
Strong	1 round	= 1 day	20
Moderate	1 minute	= 1 day	15
Mild	1 hour	= 1 day	10
Faint	1 day	= 1 day	5
Mild	1 week	= 1 day	10
Moderate	1 month	= 1 day	15
Strong	1 year	= 1 day	20
Major	10 years	= 1 day	25

had passed but to his mortal fellows only an hour had; the scene he saw when *scrying* would not have taken place yet, and since his return has altered the events that led up to that scene, the events he witnessed may never come to pass at all. A distortion of 1 week = 1 day would make a day for the traveler equal a week for his fellows; he could step through the portal and find himself among his fellows just a few rounds later than the scene he saw while *scrying* on them. Finally, a distortion of 1 month = 1 day would cause the traveler to arrive one month later than he left and three weeks later than the scene he witnessed while *scrying*.

Time lost or gained this way might or might not have its full effect on the traveler's age, depending on the portal. For an example of time catching up with a traveler, if a human goes to Faerie for two weeks and then returns through a portal with a time distortion of 1 year=1 day, he finds that he is 14 years older and that it is 14 years later than he left. If a child goes to Faerie, spends twenty years there and grows up, then returns through a portal with a time dilation of 1 round=1 year, she finds herself a child again when she arrives home, where it is almost as if she had never left. Visitors to Faerie have been known to spend a few days there and then return home only to crumble to dust from the weight of years. Natives of Faerie may resist the time distortion with a Will save (DC depends on the strength of the time distortion, as shown on the table **Minimum Time Distortion by Portal Strength**, above). Note that portals exist which do not cause time to catch up with the traveler, so that he or she may arrive in distant times without aging a bit; these portals are often closely-guarded secrets.

Any fey can determine the strength of a portal and whether it accelerates or decelerates time with a Knowledge (nature) check against DC 20. A portal's strength is a measurement of how greatly it distorts time and space; see the table **Minimum Time Distortion by Portal Strength** for the minimum amount of distortion

that can result from a portal of a given strength. A portal which falls between two entries uses the smaller of the two distortion strengths. A Faerie native might not know the nature or strength of a portal until it passes through unless it has the help of a guide.

Portals are typically the only way to get to or from Annwn and Ladinion. *Plane shift* is often difficult to use to reach these realms because the knowledge of making the necessary tuning fork is rare. (Note that most interplanar travel spells cannot reach layers of a plane beyond the first without a tuning fork matching the destination layer.) Annwn contains portals to Ladinion, Terra, the Land of Dreams, and the Sea of Thought. Ladinion has few portals other than those leading to Annwn.

Most of Faerie's portals only function sometimes—some only work during a certain phase of the moon, others during a certain season, others during a certain time of day, and a few during a certain cosmological alignment which may occur annually or millennia apart. The most common frequencies are: daily at twilight, every month during the three nights of the full moon, and every year on the night of one or the other solstice. Many a portal also requires that the traveler approach it in a special manner, such as circling it three times counterclockwise first. Portals between Annwn and Ladinion and Terra usually function much like soft planar boundaries rather than clear, instantaneous portals. For instance, a woman may wander into a fog bank in the Fleeting Realms and wander out to discover that she is in Annwn.

ANNWN

In the Otherworld, geography mirrors the coexistent mundane world. To many mortals, Near Faerie is a strange, magical, and exaggerated reflection of Terra—to many fey, on the other hand, the Fleeting Realms are benighted, desolate, and muted aspects of Annwn. A portal from Terra to Annwn generally goes to the same place, and distance is more or less constant between the two layers. However, certain sites shift into Ladinion, and some paths are quite variable in distance much like that deeper layer; travelers can use a series of such backroads to make a trek in Annwn seem much shorter than a parallel trip in Terra.

The Badlands: Expanses of empty space in the Fleeting Realms are regions called the Badlands in Annwn. Instead of true vacuum, the Badlands are extreme environments of a more worldly sort. Some parts are tundras of unearthly cold; some are deserts of impossible heat; still others are unbelievably stormy oceans (often also lethally cold or hot) concealing depths of destroying pressure. One can reach the Badlands from the planetary regions of Annwn by choosing a random direction and walking that way for a time—in a short while, one is at the edge of the Badlands and can possibly traverse them to regions of the Otherworld coexistent with different worlds.

Avalon

Also known as the Isle of Apples, Avalon is the home of many great healers and artisans of the sylvan realms. It sometimes exports magical fruits, remedies, and remarkable magic items all across Faerie. Thanks to tales of its wondrous inhabitants, this place attracts pilgrims from far and wide in the mortal realms and in Faerie who seek healing or power. The island is currently ruled by nine sister-priestesses who revere nature's bounty and mercy.

Avalon is ringed by a series of breathtaking hills, within which is a vale of exquisite beauty and unmitigated bounty. The land gives of itself freely and without toil. It currently lies parallel to the infamous Terran land of Logres, whose king has in the past been an ally of the island's ladies. In fact, one King Arthur used *Excalibur*, a mythic sword forged upon the shores of this isle, as a symbol of his rule before he relinquished it and came to be healed here.

Perhaps the most famous denizen of the island is Morgan Le Fay, who swears fealty to no one and never ceases to weave impressive schemes within the lands of mortals. Mongibel, Morgan's castle, is built into the side of a titanic mountain of lodestone. The lodestone lies upon one shore and is very dangerous to vessels containing metal—they are often attracted with such force that they are smashed to bits where stone meets sea. Morgan can control the magnetism of the monolith.

The Court of the Undying Season

The Harbingers of the Undying Season have their stronghold in a freezing tundra region of the Badlands. Here, secret redoubts hold chilling gardens of exquisite and lifeless beauty. Alluring fey vampires rest here between trips to tempt or devour hapless mortals or foolish fey. This is the only part of Faerie which contains a significant population of undead.

Chicomoztoc

Ancient tradition holds that the banished fey queen called Cessair the Corrigan departed Faerie through these caves which connect Paradwys to the Fleeting Realms. Another tale claims that the sapient race (or another race of humen, often elves) first originated in Chicomoztoc's bowels. Chicomoztoc's only known exit in Terra opens upon a world utterly dead and barren. Even the planet's star is nearing its demise. In Ladinion, Chicomoztoc merges with the cave system beneath the mountains of Paradwys. There is a prophecy which states that within these caverns lies the power to eradicate the race born from within it. Chicomoztoc is also known as the Seven Caverns, because it is naturally divided into seven major cave systems.

Peristan

Although not well-connected, a few hot regions of the Badlands are known collectively as Peristan because they

are inhabited by a surprising number of peris, fey of scent who are born from extraplanar spirits that became permanently integrated into the Mortal Coil. The regions of Peristan are centered around three cities: Amberabad, Gauherabad, and Shadukam. These are trade cities which succeed largely because their portals are unusually stable and produce little distortion in time when used—visitors usually lose no more than twice the time they experience passing.

Like all fey cities, those of Peristan are built as outgrowths of the natural beauty surrounding them. Living stone is carved, as if by wind, into countless unique alcoves perfect for habitation or shopkeeping with a few light touches. Paths meander but are broad enough to rarely be packed. Rainbows and auroras provide soft light like twilight to gently illuminate the night. Steam vents provide heat in the desert night and profusely overgrown springs provide water and shade in the searing day. The buildings and markets are verdant and impossible to distinguish from the oases at the heart of each city. Some are even built on living or mobile materials (including large, sleep-prone creatures) and may move around in unexpected ways.

Although these are trade cities, most fey see little worth in coins except as worked metal, and so rarely wish to trade for large quantities of it. Barter for valuable items or services are the more common modes of trade in these places. Adventurers are advised to bring interesting magic items, unique art objects, or the willingness to spend time on potentially dangerous missions to pay for their purchases here. These places all sell exotic, magical flora and fauna, but amused mortals should be careful they do not purchase something beyond their skill to handle.

Amberabad: Amberabad has perhaps the highest concentration of peris in existence, though the majority of its population are other races of fey (primarily fey related to animals and plants). It is likely the most cosmopolitan city in Faerie and is the most common route for the fey of Ladinion to take time to become familiar with the outside Cosmos. Its population is fairly transient; few residents live in the city for extended periods of time. Visitors include notable numbers of humanoids, giants, and dragons. Amberabad is built around natural portals to the Land of Dreams and Sea of Thought and also has portals to several mortal worlds, other planes, and a few fey realms including Shadukam. Buyers come through for a wide assortment of things. Its reputation as the biggest exporter of perfume on the planes has earned it the nickname "City of Ambergris". The exquisite work of fey craftsmen often sell here for vast sums. Services are also sold here; musicians and courtesans do well, sages offer valuable information, and even Seelie healers and Unseelie assassins work for the highest bidders in the Old City.

The Old City, said to have been built by fallen angels called the Voyeurs, has an infrastructure composed mostly

of creeping trees and mangroves clinging to massive skeletons. The titanic plants draw minerals from the bone to produce tubes large enough to serve as aqueducts and support balcony-like, rock-hard leaves. The bones are said to be the remnants of a pod of astral whales that fell into the Badlands through the rift from the Sea of Thought. At the opposite end of Amberabad is the Dream Ward, built around the rift to the Land of Dreams. Its walls and spires hang with countless dreamcatchers kept by dream brokers, who trade in harvested sensations. Between the Old City and the Dream Ward is the central oasis, which blooms with exotic and aromatic plants used for making perfumes. Among them are chronolilies, Dream-native plants used for scrying across time which attract soothsayers and mystics from far and wide. Some fey, especially agents for smaller faerie courts, work here as recruiters for mortal adventurers, whom they send on quests the court needs fulfilled outside Faerie. However, Amberabad is cautious about whom it admits; only traders who are not considered dangerous after close scrutiny may do business here. It has had problems in the past with githyanki raids, which have been at least reduced thanks to the influence of a powerful red dragon who has recently taken up residence and threatens peri dominance of the incense trade.

Gauherabad: Known as the City of Jewels, Gauherabad stands on a huge volcanic mountain rising from a boiling sea. Inhabitants soar under their own power, using mounts, or on skin kites from cliff-face districts to palaces that float on rising volcanic smoke. Visitors enter from several stable vortexes to the Elemental Realities and other portals. These vortexes pour out such intense energy that it is difficult for much to live here outside the shelter of the fey oasis. In fact, Gauherabad is said to be built on a world born dead, whose raw elements refused to be tamed enough for life to take root. The land seethed and roiled, burned and drowned, and was blown away as dust before the sun quickly burned itself out. After the world fell lifeless—not even a planet is left in Terra near its darkened star—a Seelie Knight who witnessed the tragedy founded Gauherabad in Annwn amid elemental extremes little better than that which killed the world. She hoped encouraging communication between fey and elementals would prevent something similar from happening again, and at least the fey trade and dialogue with elemental beings here. Consequently, the city serves as an unofficial meeting-place for the Gatekeepers of Essence. It is now ruled by a peri pasha hailing from the Reality of Mineral.

Gauherabad's population includes large numbers of magical beasts and jann as well as terrain and weather fey. Many fey courts use Gauherabad to find and hire elementals or others to do jobs for them in Terra and the Elemental Realities. Others trade fey craftwork and elemental raw materials. In addition to the vortexes,

Gauherabad has notable portals to cities in three of the four major Elemental Realities: the City of Brass in Fire, the Citadel of Ice and Steel in Air, and the Great Dismal Delve in Earth. There was once a portal to the Citadel of Ten Thousand Pearls in Water, but it was destroyed.

Shadukam: Shadukam, called the City of Desire, holds several gates to the Realms Beyond and is a neutral ground for the Princes of Passion. The population, aside from peris and emotion fey, include many magical beasts and an infestation of pseudodragons and faerie dragons, all of whom are ruled by a peri pasha who was born of an azata. This is a site of commerce between quite a few fey groups and their spiritual allies, including night hags, titans, azatas, agathions, and occasionally formians, rakshasas, or demons. There are also gates to Amberabad and a few other Faerie sites. The gates bring in many allies and servants who protect fey interests (usually where fey are weak, especially in the Realms Beyond) as well as allowing some spirits to hire fey aid. There are surprising numbers of outsider sages here, where the fey can take advantage of their differing perspectives for the right price.

Most of the trade in Shadukam is of services, but magic items are also important to its economy; many fey adore magic items in general, undead slayers like to trade for holy and disruption weapons from the celestial gates, and vile weapons from the Hag's Gate are popular amongst certain Unseelie factions. The Hag's Gate, main thoroughfare to the Realms Below, unfortunately opens to a place much disputed in Hades and is assaulted by divs with some regularity. At such times, the peri defenders are forced to fight and often call on powerful Faerie Knights or mortal adventurers to help, especially on the Hades side of the portal.

LADINION

Ladinion is the layer of Faerie further removed from the Fleeting Realms. Nature here is more primal, powerful, and pure. It is more malleable than Annwn, and shifts around relative to the other layers of the Mortal Coil at varying paces in different areas (at the whims of powerful fey, as well as on its own). Some parts of its geography are relatively stable, however. The Planar Cartographic Society has assigned an arbitrary "north" toward a massive frostfell region for the simple purpose of having a reference point.

Andomhain

Andomhain, the Black Abyss, is a vast deep-sea region of cave complexes, hills, and fortresses riddled with air pockets and dominated by a vast tower called Tir Andomhain. Roughly as large as four massive mountains, the rugged terrain makes the structure seem larger still. Mostly air-filled, about half of Tir Andomhain's interior is covered by lakes of benthic seawater open to the ocean depths.

Andomhain is utterly without sunlight, but many parts are lit by glowing fungi, fish, or torches. Some areas, especially those underwater, are nearly devoid of life and have the minor negative-dominant trait. However, no parts are devoid of death. Although few know why, dead and dying creatures and plants find their way here from all over Faerie. The sea washes them in constantly, even from seemingly distant waters. The earth itself disgorges them; tales tell of dying wanderers being swallowed by sinkholes or sandstorms far away and then awakening in the dirt of Tir Andomhain. Some dying beasts seem to instinctively seek out portals leading here. It is said that all the soil and seas of Faerie touch Andomhain somehow, and for this it is nicknamed “the Roots of the World”.

All parts of Andomhain are populated by organisms with a skewed life cycle—they grow fast and strong off of profuse dead matter and then begin a long period of weakening and senescence before they rejoin the rot they fed on. Always they are plagued by disease, either slight or debilitating. Only the fomorians, the dominant inhabitants here, seem unfazed. This may simply be because they tend to be diseased and misshapen for most of their lives anyway. The giants dwell primarily in fortresses built of bone, iron, copper, and crystal.

Tir Andomhain is one of the oldest habitations in Faerie, built by the primeval giantess Domnu. She had arrived in Faerie during an ancient conflict between dragons and giants, when a group of giants took asylum with Queen Gloriana. Many giants left at the end of the conflict, but Domnu and her followers stayed and built Tir Andomhain as their new home. It is said that she is mother of both the fomorian and the firbolg races.

Since then, Tir Andomhain and the surround region have changed hands many times. During the *Wars of Divine Succession*, the tower became the seat of the Unseelie Court under King Tethra. The Court moved elsewhere eventually, but though it came back again from time to time, it always left again. When King Vindos II killed or drove out all the fomorians of the Unseelie Court, he took Andomhain as his personal realm. The Queen of Air and Darkness, in turn, chose another site as her retreat when she succeeded him.

More recently, a large region of Andomhain including part of Tir Andomhain was conquered by the fomorian warlord Inciona. Desiring its ancient secrets and hoping to exploit its many planar links, she set herself up in the palace Caer Dathyl within Tir Andomhain. Since then, Inciona has spent her time reinforcing her holdings, repairing decayed fortifications, and conquering surrounding areas to create a buffer against her enemies.

During this time, the realm has been plagued by even more death than usual because her servants greedily horde whatever resources they can pluck from the fierce grip of Andomhain. Consequently, the fomorian holdings are

havens for some life. Fomorians collect up beleaguered examples of bounty and beauty and preserve them in grand gardens, where they can be more efficiently exploited.

Aside from the fomorians, strange deep-sea Unseelie fey and vicious linnorms lurk in the shadows of Tir Andomhain, and there are whispers of crevasses and caverns deep beneath which hide secrets as old as Faerie itself. Few dare venture there, and fewer have returned. Those who come back are mad and crippled, babbling about portals which lead to places of insane suffering.

The Cities of Danu

Four cities—Falias, Findias, Gorias, and Murias—were the center of the Seelie Court’s power during the reign of Queen Danu in the Dawn of the Gods. Danu’s court had embraced mortals’ desire for ownership of land as a tactic to get them invested in its preservation, but they let themselves go astray. They became more interested in the means, the people and their ownership, than the original ends, the land itself and the power of life. As the fey rejected their wayward monarch, these cities fell into disuse during the reign of Queen Aeval. Their ruins linger unlike most fey cities (which usually vanish with hardly a trace if left uninhabited for long) as a reminder of the mistakes of Danu and her children, the Tuatha Dé Danann. Due to the shifting of Ladinion in the intervening time, the cities are lost to the four corners of Faerie and difficult to locate.

Murias, City of the Eternal Sunset, is still remembered by some as the first of the Cities of Danu to be lost, sinking into the western sea through the neglect of Danu’s steward. Now, it is said, Murias’s cracked bells ring out of their own volition from towers built for beings larger than any humen. Their mournful sound presages times of great sorrow, such as the foul bargain struck between Queen Aeval and Lilith, the Lord of the Sixth Hell. Another story holds that a magical crystal egg lies in Murias, and that within the egg sleeps the fabled *Swan of Endless Tales* who knows the stories of many ancient secrets now forgotten by most of Creation. It was meant as a gift from Semias, the ruler of the city, to Atlas, the Ancient Titan.

Findias, the City of Dawn in the east, is believed by many to contain relics from Nuada’s time as Grand Duke of Spring, such as the *Sword of Life*, capable of repulsing even age itself. Findias was the second city to be lost when it was overrun by a coven of terrifying hags who killed and eventually devoured all the remaining inhabitants.

Gorias, to the south, was called the City of Midsummer and once was home to the House of Summer. It was the third city to fall, devastated by invading fomorians who sowed the earth with salt and turned the surrounding land into a supernaturally dry wasteland.

To the north was Falias, which was often home to Queen Danu herself. It was the City of Winter’s Night, the last permanent home of the House of Winter before its

power base shifted to the Unseelie Court. It rests on a giant iceberg which once was larger than a mountain and harder than diamond, but it is now steadily melting. Even so, this city is the best-preserved, since it retained inhabitants longest. As the Tuatha Dé Danann began to neglect fey politics, their steward Seville recognized that something was wrong and stayed behind with the Seelie Court in Falias. She coronated Queen Aeval there, legitimizing her succession of Danu. Seville eventually organized the Order of the Lake as a more restrained replacement for the outreach which had led the Tuatha Dé to go astray. Falias was sacked and abandoned during the *Plague War*.

Although it may not be the same place, a fomorian warlord named Lyonesse recently founded a new kingdom on watery ruins which resemble Murias. Since she makes it difficult for anyone to explore and identify the origin of the buildings, many suspect she knows the truth of the matter and simply wants to loot its wonders before anyone else knows what she has.

Cucaña

Cucaña is a land of bounty and a place of Seelie power. The weather is always refreshing and mild like early spring. Nearly every part of this kingdom is made of food appealing and filling to most creatures, but especially mortals. Buildings are often made of bread and candy and streets are paved with nuts. There are even rivers of milk and honey. Many mortals are tempted to stay here forever, at least at first.

The atmosphere is always festive in Cucaña, as if every day is a special occasion (which it is for whomever happens to be visiting at the time). Everywhere there are trappings of celebration, especially maypoles used for humorous games. However, this place rarely offers permanent asylum. At night, the food of Cucaña has a drowsing effect; visitors who fail a Fortitude save (DC 20) fall asleep and are gently transported back to their home worlds. Usually, the result is that mortals who come here rest as they need to and then return to living their lives rejuvenated. However, some unfortunate souls wake to find they are home but in a time far removed from when they left.

Cucaña is the realm of Talitu the Fairy Godmother. She presides over the Seelie House of Celadine as they seek harmonious relations with mortals, and it meets here in her court. Cucaña can sometimes be reached by digging through a haystack on any land blessed by a member of the House (such as Vivienne). On rare occasions, a servant of the House of Celadine may invite mortals here to give them reprieve and strength against particularly harsh conditions in their everyday lives.

Elphame

There are countless tales of blissful lands buried away in the deep forests of the True Otherworld. Although the way

is known to be perilous, so too is the destination known to be the very image of perfect beauty and endless joy. Many a young dreamer or seasoned adventurer has left behind the mundane realms to seek this ultimate reward. The way is hard to find, and once it is found, the hero must defeat or evade beasts, trolls, dragons, and cruel fey witches. Along the way, treacherous, diseased gremlins haunt dark passages with dangerous traps. But at last, the hero finds the welcoming courts of Elphame, filled with lovely fey dancers, wondrous feasts, and the promise of dreams come true. The court denizens include gray jesters, huldrefolk, nymphs, daoine sidhe, joystalers, and quickling and sprite servants.

But the beauty of Elphame hides a dark side. The fey revelers are ruled over by the huldrefolk, fey whose beauty is hollow in every sense of the word. Many of the dangers in approaching it are orchestrated to attract powerful and impressionable mortals. The monsters are paid for their services with sacrifices and treasure by the huldrefolk rulers. The fey here take the love, friendship, and affection of mortals and give nothing back but empty semblances of pleasure. The faerie food here is insubstantial; though it seems the most glorious fare that any visitor has ever eaten, it provides no sustenance. Due to the magical nature of the food, visitors slowly starve without ever realizing it. At the same time, the shallow and meaningless pleasure erodes the memory of what earnest emotion means, until visitors are empty husks forgetful of the world they left behind.

Elphame alters the effects of Ladinion's entrapping trait. Every day that visitors spend enjoying the courts' attractions, they must make a Will save (DC 10 + number of consecutive days spent in Ladinion). Those that fail their save suffer 1d4 points of Wisdom drain and do not notice the progress of any disease they may be suffering. Provided that their bodies do not give out from starvation before their souls give out at 0 Wisdom, mortals become fey with no memory of their former lives. Transfiguration produces a huldrefolk if the mortal had 10 or higher Charisma; otherwise, it produces a mite afflicted with leprosy or slimy doom (50% chance of either).

A few desperate mortals come to Elphame despite knowing its true nature. They blame their suffering on love and memory and seek only a place where they can leave such things behind. These souls are ripe for the picking, and the huldra nobles do not waste the effort fooling them. They simply provide exactly what the poor fools want. Queen Vae, ruler of Elphame, appears to be sweet, charming, and vapid to most beings below her in station, but she is a consummate liar and one of the greatest illusionists in Faerie. She is renowned among the fey as the greatest beauty of the Unseelie Court.

Rot, pain, and waste hides everywhere in Elphame, just out of sight. Without Vae's illusions, one can see the

green of her palace is densely littered with the bones of her victims. Shadows hide pools of ash filled with corpses and outcasts carrying deadly contagions. Behind closed doors, fey courtesans feast on the withered corpses of their former guests.

The Garden of the Hesperides

This realm is where dryads rule supreme. It is guarded by Ladon, a draconic ally of the fey and child of Gaea. The garden lies in the far west of Ladinion. The place is plentiful with oaks, apple trees, and many other plants.

The most famous feature of the garden is its blessed apple trees which bear magical fruit. These golden *Apples of Joy* greatly extend the lifespans of beings who eat them. It is these apples which allow the resident dryads (along with their trees) to live many thousands of years. The apple trees descend from a sprig given as a gift to the fey by Gaea as a sign of goodwill. The Olympian goddess Hera is a frequent guest here, as she is an ally of the Hesperides. Nathair Sgiathach also comes here regularly, since his realm is adjacent to the Garden.

Hyperborea

Located to the north of the great frostfell, this is a land of near-constant sunshine where the sun sets only once a year. It is a Seelie stronghold, and has the minor positive-dominant trait. The brilliant sun illuminates an expanse of rolling, verdant hills cut through by the fiery river Eridanus. Many places flower for centuries at a time with lovely amaranth blossoms. One region is scarred by divine fire, where a sun-god's chariot flew close to earth and its demigod driver was cast into the river. Phaethon, son of the Greek sun-god Apollo or Helios, had lost control of his father's chariot when the god Zeus slew him to prevent him causing even more devastation. Perhaps due to this past, Apollo still resides here often; some call it his winter home. Other gods are also often welcomed here, so Hyperborea is sometimes considered a veritable divine embassy to Faerie.

The Eridanus is among the greatest rivers in Faerie, surpassed in size only by Afon Bhlu. Along its whole length, its deep, darkly colorful mud shines as if riddled with stars and ghostly flames dance across its surface. The flames are usually harmless, but if they grow strong enough they can burn nearly anything. The banks of the Eridanus are overshadowed by massive poplars and other trees that slowly drip amber into the swift current. A few whirlpools and eddies in the depths of the river form portals to mortal worlds that open only during certain nighttime thunderstorms in the Fleeting Realms.

Hyperborea's resplendent ecology provides a home to a vast number of creatures, but most common are griffons, swans, blue-skinned firbolgs, nymphs, dryads, satyrs, and solas sidhe. The firbolgs reside in a small theocracy in the

southwest corner of Hyperborea ruled by priests of Apollo and renowned for unearthly music.

To the southeast, surrounding the region scorched by Phaethon's death, are temples to a variety of gods allied with the Seelie Court, including Garl Glittergold, several of the Seldarine, the Tuatha Dé Danann, the Æsir, and the Olympians. A number of temples to gods no longer allied with the Seelie, such as Marduk of the Babylonian Pantheon, stand in ruins. To the north are wilder places favored by the fey of the House of Amaranth and the palace of the Seelie viceroy. He oversees his court's holdings in Hyperborea and maintains good relations with the gods' temples to the south.

Paradwys

The Lifeline of the Tree of Life, the core of the cycle of souls, the Primal Nexus—Paradwys is an unmatched paragon of natural power and majesty. In this place, all the breadth of natural landscapes converge on the primal sea called Cwm Glas and the very core of the cycle of souls. At the center is Morsídhe, an island emerging from the sea very near a coastal marsh. The water of Cwm Glas is mildly and variously salty, capable of supporting every sort of natural marine life imaginable. Surrounding Cwm Glas, in turn, is a variety of terrain types: marshes, forests, hills, mountains riddled with vast cave systems, deserts, and plains. The plains are divided from the marsh by a broad river called Afon Bhlu, fed by Cwm Glas.

Paradwys can be thought of as the arbitrary center of Ladinion, and is simultaneously near most parts of the layer thanks to a deep wrinkle in time and space around the region. Anyone can take advantage of this strange proximity, if he knows the way and heads in the appropriate direction. For instance, to reach a mountainous region of Ladinion one must depart from the mountainous part of Paradwys. From far beyond, Paradwys appears like a towering natural force; from the desert it appears as a stationary mushroom-shaped sandstorm, from the forest it seems to be an impossibly high arch in the canopy, and from a mountain range it appears to be a distant but absurdly massive peak.

In places of the most concentrated primal nature, even parts of Terra touch Paradwys. Many of the stars in Paradwys's night sky are actually mortal worlds, which one can reach by flying toward the right star at the proper angle. Traveling straight from Ladinion to Terra is dangerous, however, and almost always includes a powerful time distortion.

Paradwys is inhabited by the most magnificent and rare of natural life, including mu spores, elder treants, prismauruses and other epic magical beasts, dire animals, nesting populations of devastation vermin, and many others. Only primeval races of fey dwell here outside of the few settled areas, and they tend to be solitary. Fenghuangs

appear in unusually large numbers. The homes of both soul shepherd orders (the Sowers and the Harvesters) can be found here; the Sowers reside on the plain at the head of Afon Bhlu and the Harvesters at the edge between forest and hills.

Morsídhe: The heart of Paradwys, Morsídhe is a massive faerie mound rising from the edge of Cwm Glas. Much of the hill is covered in a magical hedge maze. At the center, concentric helices of dead and unborn souls spiral in and out of the earth. The unborn souls are collected by the Sowers for distribution; the dead are guided in by the Harvesters. The sídhe is guarded and tended by a secretive Faerie Queen, Fathaghn, who interacts with other fey only rarely. Many speculate about what secrets may lie concealed under Fathaghn's maze.

The Celestial Sphere: High overhead in Paradwys, the sun remains stationary above Morsídhe. At night, it turns into the moon without setting; in fact, half of the sphere is solar and the other half lunar. Unlike a typical celestial body, this sphere is only a few hundred miles above the ground and a few miles in diameter. It has its own objective directional gravity extending from the surface, has solid ground, and is not conventionally dangerous to approach. If the cycle of souls below shifts strongly in one direction (such as if a world is destroyed and there is a sudden influx of dead souls), the diurnal cycle of the celestial sphere may become temporarily imbalanced.

The Lifeline of the Tree of Life: Among the greatest manifestations of nature's magic, Paradwys is the most powerful ley node in the Mortal Coil. The consequences of this immense energy include time wrinkles and storms of fertility and decay that whirl across the region.

Thule

This great island, found farther northwest than any other recorded locale, is surrounded by a freezing-cold ocean. Here, it is perpetually twilight over the volcanic sea-caves, star-strewn beaches, storm-swept mountains, and acidic bogs. The highest point on the island, Mount Yaanek, constantly belches forth purplish smoke laced with palpable grief. The smoke drifts lazily here and there across the sky and mountaintops and can drive the unwary to despair, disaster, or raving madness. Due to its infamy, few dare to explore Yaanek's slopes to find the source of its melancholy.

Thule's most famous resident is the venerable Watcher of the Current known as Crieddylad, the Witch of Fates. Her realm is a south-facing region of sea-cliffs riddled with shining crevasses where stars constantly streak in and out of the earth, dying and being reborn at their lady's merest gesture.

Thule is fundamentally a place of boundaries, where the edges of Faerie brush against others: the Sea of Thought, the Land of Dreams, and—supposedly—even stranger

planar sites. Through vortexes and color pools, the island attracts hags, witches, solas sídhe, angels, oras, peris, devils, and lost souls of countless stripes both dead and still living. They are sometimes waylaid here among the nascent and dying stars, looking for much the same sort of renewal in life or afterlife. There are rumored to be regions on the island where land, sea, and sky blur together in a strange soupy fog. These patches are said to hold ancient secrets, some as old as Faerie itself.

The Tower of Bab-il

The Tower of Bab-il is a massive many-tiered structure that was obviously left to rot before it was finished. In some places, there are even remnants of scaffolds and support beams that have dissolved with age. It is guarded by many very powerful and secretive fey, including the greatest of ruin chanters. Most of them will attack any interloper on sight, fearing they are looters who have come to take the mythical power of this long-lost site.

Yet, none stand guard outside the Tower. It is a very difficult place to find, hidden in a remote corner of Ladinion. The surrounding land is ravaged by unpredictable storms, mere vestiges of the dangerous power locked within. The Tower is a construct of the Language Primeval, Aleph. Its form and abilities were defined by words so fundamental that they did not merely describe reality, but shaped it. A triumph of mortal mastery over the language, the Tower was built to defy the gods and entropy itself.

By the middle of the Era of Empires, the first great civilizations of modern mortals were all but vanished. The people of one such society, perhaps the last, feared their eventual dissolution. So, they united under a giant nephilim called Nimrod when he said that they could find eternal power and unity if they reached the heights of power inhabited by the gods. To that end, they began constructing a tower at a place known as Bab-il ("gate of the gods"). They used the Language Primeval, for theirs was among the few remaining mortal cultures that had mastered it; they understood Aleph better than even the greatest sages can fathom today.

The mighty tower grew up and up to impossible heights, reaching ever nearer to the gods. Through eldritch technology built by the Language Primeval, they had the power to harness the storms of the sky and the raw power which the gods might use to smite them for their hubris. Some whisper they even held the secret to forcing their way into whatever pleasant afterlife they desired. The gods above knew that these mortals were dangerous, that they might even steal the station of the gods through their treachery. The Seelie fey below, led by Queen Rhiannon II, saw how easily the world around these united mortals could be destroyed by their mastery.

Uniting against a mutual threat, the younger gods and the elder Seelie together sealed and broke the Language

Primeval so that mortals could never again wield its full power. The gods ensured that the civilization was ruined and scattered, while the fey stole away with the unfinished tower and the dangerous technologies locked inside. This Tower of Bab-il still resists the fey's attempts to unravel its power permanently. They can break and seal the runes and sigils of Aleph inside, but for every part which is broken, another yet-intact part will repair still another segment.

An elite guard watches over the tower, for worlds could be shaken or destroyed by its secrets. Many mortals still seek after it, either because they wish to finish it or because they desire to learn the secrets of Truespeech held within. Tales tell not only of unknown runes, but also wind funnels that "speak" the Language Primeval in the storms the Tower conjures around itself and glasswork that projects runic plays of light when the unreliable sunlight strikes at the right angle. These and more tricks of the Tower's builders constantly vex the fey who wish the Tower destroyed, since weeks of damage might be undone by an unforeseen moonbeam.

Some believe the only way to permanently destroy the Tower is with the Language Primeval that built it—a difficult task, since the Language's most powerful aspects have been lost for so long. The only ray of hope in living memory came when the Last Word, an obvious word of destruction, was discovered in the Realms Beyond. But it was held by the foul demonic entity Tenebrous until it was lost again with his destruction, so none know if it could have finally brought the Tower down.

Ecology of Faerie

Faerie's ecology is in most ways a more magical, extreme version of mortal nature. The difference is greatest in Ladinion, where primal magic is at its strongest; Annwn, on the other hand, is bound closely to Terra's bounties and dangers.

From the outside looking in, Faerie's time usually moves slower, but the turns it takes are more extreme. From within, this means it can seem faster and certainly more dangerous than mortal lands. The weather is more glorious when calm and more violent when not. Colors are brighter, pleasure is sweeter, pain is sharper, and emotions are stronger. The wild beasts are more fearsome, as are some of the plants. Many of the most powerful magical beasts, such as brachyuruses and phoenixes, are found almost exclusively here.

A subtle but unbreakable link joins Faerie to Terra. Any change in one brings forth an echo in the other, as a thrown rock makes ripples in water. Especially insightful Otherworld figures may use this link by growing their power base in Terra or destroying their foes' mortal counterparts in order to indirectly improve their position in Faerie. Yet, this tactic is risky. Ripples may unexpectedly warp or grow or shrink when crossing the Rivers of Time.

FEY

Fey are the dominant life-forms in Faerie, although they are not as numerous as animals, plants, or vermin. All fey have a bond of some kind to an external force. Most are clearly bonded to nature generally or to some specific part of it; even those few fey who do not at first appear to be nature-bound (such as zeitgeists) are commonly thought to share in it indirectly. The precise qualities of a bond vary from individual to individual, race to race, and world to world—dryads die if parted from their trees, while satyrs merely have a knack for encouraging reproduction in other creatures. In nearly all cases, keeping in touch with nature in whatever way suits them can give fey power in a number of ways. In turn, nature may depend on fey for the way it functions.

In some cases, nature exists only by the work of the fey and would fall into ruins without their influence. Gods of nature or other primal entities might play a similar role, but in general these are less effective than the fey because they lack the fey's reach or aptitude. In an ecology like this, removing the spirits behind it—be they fey or gods—would be like pulling the soul from a body, quickly killing it. Without guidance, the natural world would quickly lose cohesion and might even unravel into its component elements, energies, and alignments. On a smaller scale, killing a dryad might likewise kill her tree. If a Faerie Lord of Summer like this were murdered, his world would simply not experience summer until a new fey took up

the Lord's mantle. In Ladinion, many of the mightiest fey (particularly archfey) have this type of bond. If such an archfey dies, his realm may soon collapse into a tempest of churning climates, terrains, and magical forces until it finds a stable equilibrium with its surroundings.

In other cases, nature depends on the fey for its efficiency but not its function. Without guidance, things become unhinged and degrade but do not fail altogether. For example, if a patch of marsh depends this way upon an enclave of local fey, the extinction of the enclave might cause the bog to suffer chronic dry spells or frequent population imbalances (causing food shortages, plagues, or extinctions). Elements, energies, and alignments can become unbalanced or misplaced. If such an archfey of Autumn were dethroned, that world's autumns would still occur, but would also be fraught with some unseasonable weather and other problems until a new archfey claimed the portfolio of Autumn. The majority of Ladinion's fey have this style of relationship with the environment.

In still other cases, nature derives only its supernatural elements from fey magic. In a case such as this, a mountain without the oreid bound to it ceases to manifest her beneficence or her capriciousness, but does not otherwise change or degenerate. If an evil and vindictive Queen of Winter of this sort were slain, her world's winters would remain as normal, but they would no longer reflect her wicked spite (perhaps those who do not placate the Queen would no longer tend to be killed by extreme weather). The regions of Ladinion with the lowest fey populations, such as where fomorians and linnorms rule, often demonstrate this independence from fey bonds.

Fey Senses

A fey's external bond gives him a powerful intuition related to it. He instinctively recognizes threats to his bond and reacts accordingly, depending on his disposition. Most famously, this means that fey sense the unnatural aura of many undead and aberrations whenever they approach within 30 feet. Any creature whose presence makes animals nervous usually puts a fey on alert for danger. Fey's bonds have also been suggested to impart them with their famously keen senses and innate affinity for magic.

Additionally, all fey are sensitive to iron. Some suggest this is because the artifice represented by iron is opposed to the natural magic which sustains fey. Regardless of the reason, the touch of any iron alloy (such as steel) is unpleasant to the fey, something like touching cold liquid butter filled with biting ants. Pure iron (such as cast iron used in horseshoes) makes fey even more uncomfortable, affecting them at a distance of 5 feet. Cold iron is the worst—it affects fey at a range of 10 feet, and touching it causes mild pain. Cold iron is effective even in alloy form. As a result, those fey who utilize metal equipment usually use alternatives to iron, such as bronze or alchemical silver.

Some fey are so sensitive to iron that it can be used to repel them much like holy symbols ward off vampires.

Fey Metabolism

While fey are living beings and most have many of the same biological processes as animals and mortals, they are essentially magical creatures. Every fiber of a fey's being is infused with the magic of her bond.

Fey may be carnivorous, herbivorous, omnivorous, or even live off of sunlight and soil or emotions and thought. In addition, all fey have the capacity to derive at least some sustenance directly from the flourishing of their bond, which allows them to consume relatively little food.

Fey Reproduction

There are a variety of means of reproduction among fey, including sexual reproduction, budding, spontaneous genesis, and transfiguring other creatures.

Sexual Reproduction: Many fey reproduce just as mammals do; most fey known to humans fall into this group. In addition to giving live birth to live offspring, however, some lay eggs (as do fenghuangs) or sow seeds (as do twigjacks).

When two fey of different races (such as a dryad and a satyr) mate, there is generally a roughly even chance that the child will be of either race. Only rarely does a fey-fey pairing produce a true crossbreed. Though the race of the child may seem random, it is possible that the Sowers are able to determine what sort of race the child is by choosing which soul to give it.

Budding: A few fey reproduce asexually, growing their offspring as parts of their bodies until they are ready to be broken off as new creatures. Redcaps are the most well-known fey of this variety.

Spontaneous Genesis: Some fey spawn from nature instead of or in addition to conventional reproduction. For example, moras grow from dead brain matter and oras spawn from the dreams of Mortal Coil natives. Such spawned fey appear more often in places near powerful material ley lines.

Transfiguration: Others (such as some half-fey and huldras) are created by transforming non-fey creatures into fey. Rarely, one fey will become another kind of fey. The resultant creature normally has the memories and most or all of the personality of the original, but in some cases, the resultant being is essentially new. The original appearance is always largely retained, but altered to fall within the norms of the new race.

The practice of transforming mortals is controversial among those ultra-conservative fey who consider the previous form to be opposed to the natural order or who consider fey to be a special, inborn status. Many Seelie look down on such fey because they are of "lesser" origin, but still accept them as better than non-fey.

Changelings: The fey are widely known for stealing things from mortals, and children are no exception. Many times, a slow or sickly child has been said to be a changeling, a fairy left behind when the real child was taken. Usually, these claims are nothing more than excuses for parents to neglect or abuse their all-too-human children. But sometimes, it is the truth. The fey are creatures of potential and magic, and sometimes they feel that the best way to make use of mortals with great potential is to raise the mortals as fey, away from the Fleeting Realm. A taken child can become a fey, sometimes gaining the half-fey template and sometimes becoming fey of a specific race. Other stolen ones remain more or less typical members of their original race.

This is the primary form of procreation for huldra and a few other fey groups. Unseelie courtiers use mortals to supplement all steps of procreation, so as to keep their numbers up without moving away from the raw destruction that gives them strength.

Brughs

Many fey reside in lairs unique to their race. However, nearly half of all fey, regardless of race, choose instead to reside in brughs. A brugh is a specialized hollow mound. Oftentimes, the interior will be difficult or impossible to reach without fey magic or some racial talent of the owner. For example, a dryad may build one such that the only way in is to tree stride through a tree whose trunk blocks the entrance. Or, a brugh may exist in Faerie but be accessible by way of a keyed portal in the mortal world.

The interior of a brugh depends upon the nature of its fey owner. For example, leprechauns prefer hut-like interiors with numerous small windows, workbenches, and wooden furniture; phookas prefer dark places to hide their ill-gotten gains and a pile of soft foliage to sleep on; daoine sidhe reside in lavish chambers with beds of down, curtains of fog, tapestries of flame, and furniture of frost or crystal.

Generally, fey will contract the creation of brughs for themselves from one of the few fey craftsman familiar with the esoteric knowledge of their construction. These craftsmen are usually gremlins, leprechauns, or korred.

Extreme Spaces and Liminal Spaces

Fey are drawn to make their homes in places of natural extremes, such as mountaintops, ocean trenches, the hearts of forests, glacier centers, and sites rich in growth or decay. However, they are prone to travel elsewhere for socialization, entertainment, or resource gathering. When seeking these things, most fey have an affinity for natural boundaries, such as beaches, foothills, cliffs, and faerie portals, especially at times of transition like twilight, equinoxes, or solstices.

Fey Aging

Although fey are not often immortal in the usual sense, they are easily mistaken for being ageless by humen. Most fey age very slowly, even compared to dwarves. The average lifespan of a fey is several millennia, although nymphs and other mid-level fey may survive for more than ten and the weakest may not survive one. All age very gracefully, only suffering true senescence in their final century or so. They can generally sense the end coming, and do not fear it.

Some of the greater fey, such as daoine sidhe and some archfey, never truly grow old. Although they must still eat, drink, sleep, and breathe, they rarely die except by violence or their own choice. Despite their potential to persist for countless eons, these beings rarely live more than twice as long as their aging fellows before being reincarnated. Often, fey with aristocratic position (regardless of agelessness) will embrace a kind of retirement for a few centuries or millennia before dying.

Like elves, fey can accept death simply by force of will (“deep slumber” and “great change” are two favored terms for this choice). The vast majority make the great change within the first dozen millennia or so of life. Reasons vary, but most often include a desire for fresh perspective, to escape their accumulated enemies or bad memories, to explore what death has to offer, to get the deepest possible rest for their fatigue, or to relieve the weight of ennui.

Fey Death

When fey die, the subtle magic permeating their forms rapidly collapses. Their bodies are reabsorbed into the essence of nature shortly after death with no need for such processes as decomposition, turning to foam, soil, verdure, thin air, or other natural substances. Their souls are generally reincarnated as are most in Faerie.

Many fey like to ensure that certain things are passed down beyond their pure souls. Some pass down knowledge in the form of songs, scrolls, tomes, spoken rituals or tales, spell formulas, or even direct memory infusions, usually granted to close relatives or allies. Some pass along their goals, either by convincing a younger fey to carry it out the mundane way or by securing an oath to see it fulfilled as a favor. Finally, some pass down their very power, such as an archfey bestowing his status on a successor or passing along artifacts or magical knowledge. Even if a ruler is ageless, having an heir ready is expected in most fey courts.

FLORA AND FAUNA

Although domesticated breeds are rarer in Faerie, many species long dead to the mortal world survive in its far-flung reaches. Most animals, plants, and vermin in Faerie behave much like they do elsewhere in the Mortal Coil, but are generally more effective at what they do, growing more bountifully, reproducing more plentifully, killing prey more quickly, evading capture more impressively, and

so on. Mightier breeds of the same animals abound (use the advanced creature simple template to represent them), along with more dire animals and behemoths. Legendary animals and awakened animals also appear with some frequency. The result is that the balance of nature is not dramatically different within Faerie, but when the inhabitants of one planar layer interacts with those from another, the creatures from deeper in the Otherworld tend to trump their more ordinary brethren. Occasionally, the magical dangers of Faerie pose a threat to more ordinary plants and animals, but many otherworldly breeds have evolved natural resistance to their effects.

OTHER CREATURES

In addition to fey and countless beasts and plants, Faerie is home to a wide variety of other beings, including hags, giants, dragons, merfolk, spriggans, and many others.

Dragons: The most commonly-encountered dragons in the Otherworld are the faerie dragons and pseudodragons that originated there and the linnorms that have carved out their own domains there since before the gods arose, although nearly any type of draconic creature is to be found somewhere here. Perhaps most infamously, the devastatingly powerful and utterly puzzling dragon known as the jabberwock is found almost exclusively in Faerie, appearing most often on battlefields in service to the Demesne Courts.

The minor pseudodragons and faerie dragons generally choose to lair near the relative safety of Seelie realms such as Cucca and Hyperborea or ancient strongholds such as the Gardens of the Hesperides (where dwells their adored father, Nathair Sgiathach). Both species are more numerous in Faerie near their father's realm, although pseudodragons are also common in the Fleeting Realm.

Linnorms, in contrast, may show up almost anywhere. In some ways contained by their patron Gottenrvnr Two-Tongues and by an ancient pact, linnorms are most frequently found near Unseelie realms such as Andomhain and sparsely-inhabited hinterlands such as the Badlands of Annwn. However, they often spread into the realms of other beings, especially giants and Demesne Court fey, which can spark violent conflicts.

Giants: Although giants of all kinds are occasionally found in Annwn, the most numerous giants of Ladinion and Faerie in general are either fomorians or fibolgan. These formidable races often fight fiercely with dragons and fey of the Demesne Courts to found and keep their vast kingdoms, generally near sites of ancient civilization such as the Cities of Danu and Andomhain. Stone, cloud, taiga, and forest giants are also more common here than elsewhere; they lair apart from other powerful creatures.

Visitors: Most of the non-native creatures that often dwell in Faerie (goblins, elves, etc.) find themselves subtly infused with the realm's magic if they stay for long. They

may sometimes acquire fey qualities, gain some limited spell-like abilities, or even become effectively half-fey.

THE CYCLE OF SOULS

Many fey revere nature as a Great Cycle, and perhaps the most distinctive aspect of that Cycle is the process of death and reincarnation. The souls of animals, fey, plants, and vermin, as well as some other life-forms, are typically reincarnated within the Mortal Coil rather than traveling to the Realms Beyond.

Sapient creatures, however, can influence where they go. Most fey, as well as most other beings native to Faerie or tied to the magic of nature (such as faerie dragons, some giants, *awakened* animals, thunderbirds, and many other magical beasts) generally reincarnate unless they become bound to a god or ideal apart from Nature. Similarly, other creatures such as humen can join the cycle of souls if they devote themselves to nature or certain religions.

The souls of ordinary animals and other beings without belief may reach the Realms Beyond after death if strong associations with alignment are imposed upon them, however. For example, a friendly, loyal dog may be seen as Good strongly enough to cause the animal's soul to pass on to Happy Hunting Grounds after death. In addition, beliefs associating animals with alignments may cause celestial animals and the like to spring into being in the Realms Beyond separate from any specific animal soul.

Some fey and mortals believe that animals, plants, and other creatures reincarnate progressively, eventually becoming fey nature spirits or humanoids after many cycles. Others hold that all these dead souls are broken down into basic spirit-stuff and new souls are recombinations of the old. There is some evidence for both beliefs.

The amount of self retained through reincarnation varies. At most, memories of major events and convictions of a past life remain, though skills do not. At least, some basic personality traits persist. The norm lies between these two extremes. Some fey have been born with memories from multiple different lifetimes. A few beings, such as fenghuangs, always retain at the upper end of this range and show no trace of having recombinant souls.

FAERIE AS STABILIZING FORCE

In the absence of Faerie's inhabitants, a world will instead be influenced directly by the local gods and/or invading outsiders. Immortal beings of ideal and concept have many times proven themselves to be ill-equipped to design a seamless organic web of interacting and imperfect living things. Indeed, they are known to (for example) create massive monsters that strain local food sources to the breaking point or to create holy springs that burn non-good creatures instead of offering ordinary water. In fact, worlds lacking Faerie as a stabilizing force tend to get destroyed more quickly than others, often due to

A subtle but unbreakable link joins Faerie to Terra. Any change in one brings forth an echo in the other, as a rock makes ripples in water.

spirits from the Realms Beyond staging cataclysmic moral or ethical conflicts there. Gods and other Powers are sometimes entirely self-sufficient creators, but few are as efficient or reliable as those of Faerie.

More than occasionally, it is the various local faerie courts and other nature spirits of a world that keep it sustainable. Depending on the world, these groups are often active only behind the scenes, keeping bizarre magical beasts, aberrations, extraplanar interlopers, and the like from overrunning the more conventional inhabitants that the fey draw power from. However, when the fey are divided into factions (as they usually are), those factions rarely coordinate their efforts.

Primal Powers such as archfey are sometimes even powerful enough on the local scale to stop gods and their foes from making war on Terra, home to the fey as well as others, and thereby saving mortal realms along with their own from becoming collateral damage. Put simply, the fey are commonly known to fend off dangerous forces, even if it is for selfish reasons. If gods are typically the reason why impossibly ancient cosmic entities have not taken over the Mortal Coil yet, then the fey are often what keeps deities from carelessly ruining their respective worlds.

The Seelie generally spread fertility widely to compensate for for all the destructive forces around, and work toward diplomacy with deities, Animal Lords, and other Powers. The Unseelie, on the other hand, tend to prevent nature from sustaining their enemies and attack those who would undermine the Unseelie power base—these dark fey have at many times warred openly with gods, giants, dragons, and other Faerie Courts. Similarly, the Demesnes and Blood Courts work for the preservation and spread of their respective spheres of influence.

Perhaps more important than discouraging divine devastation, however, is the hedging out of interlopers far more alien and caustic to natural reality than any deity or fiend. Certain archfey, especially the Watchers of the Current and the Wild Hunt, are among the few beings in Creation with the wisdom and courage to properly watch for the signs of the Void Beyond. Few others fully recognize that baleful influences from outside Creation always seethe in the darkest and strangest recesses of the planes. Countering fey efforts to keep Reality inviolate are the innumerable servants of alien Powers such as the Elder

Elemental Eye and Tharizdun.

A number of planets were made habitable in the first place by fey (particularly the Seelie), who may act as helpers to creator gods, seed life on worlds born without gods, or even create new worlds whole-cloth. The Seelie Court is perhaps the most common reason that a balanced variety of mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, various plants and fungi and microorganisms, and so on tend to inhabit each world—they know from experience what works. Creating without Faerie influence or aid, a lone deity or pantheon is more likely to forge a strange, possibly unstable world with little resemblance to most others.

The Otherworld and its masters foster variety and adaptation. A good number of magical beasts and monstrous humanoids were once disruptive to the land, yet have since grown to fit well into the natural world and sometimes become allies to the factions of Faerie.

NATURAL HAZARDS

Faerie is home to a wide variety of naturally-occurring hazards. Some of the most famous are described below; their effects are supernatural unless noted otherwise.

The Glimmer: Patches of dense and colorful foliage, rivers filled with multitudinous life, and countless varieties of insects and larger animals can fill a region with so much life that it gains the positive dominant trait. In these areas, all creatures gain fast healing 2 and experience the world more keenly and brightly. Indeed, the glimmer enhances positive emotions even more than positive energy usually does, bestowing the benefits of *good hope* (CL 12th, DC 15) on all who pass through. The glimmer can be as small as a few dozen feet across, often centered on a life-giving natural spring, or cover many miles of vibrant forests or teeming rivers or colorful reefs.

The Gloom (CR 8): Patches of a preternatural darkness can be found in wasted regions of Faerie, brimming with such death and sorrow from war, famine, or plague (often spread by the Unseelie Court) that they manifest the minor negative-dominant trait. Few living things can survive in these desolate climes; not even most of the toughened animals and fey have developed resistance to raw negative energy. Every round, each creature in the area suffers 1d6 damage. Additionally, positive emotions are sapped and diminished while negative emotions become more acute. Creatures entering a patch of the gloom for the first time must succeed on a Will save or suffer the effects of *crushing despair* (CL 12th, DC 15). The gloom can be as small as a few dozen feet across or cover many miles of dusty, corpse-strewn wasteland.

Hungry Grass (CR 7): This very dangerous plant steals the energy from beings who come near, potentially causing starvation in mere moments. The plant looks like an ordinary patch of grass about 5 feet across. It can occur in colonies of up to 13 patches. As soon as a creature steps

upon the grass, the grass starts sapping energy from all creatures within 10 feet. Each living creature in the area must succeed on a Constitution check (DC 15) or suffer 5d6 points of nonlethal damage as if from starvation, and must also succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be stunned for 1 round. All living creatures within 10 feet are affected again every round until there are no living creatures within 10 feet of the patch. The check and save DCs each increase by +2 for each consecutive round a victim is affected, until the creature spends a round outside the area or dies.

Hungry grass can be destroyed by striking it with an attack which either deals energy drain (such as *enervation*) or starvation damage (such as *famine's touch**). A Survival check against DC 20 allows one to notice a patch of hungry grass before stepping on it.

Note: Damage from starvation is lethal if the creature is already unconscious. This damage cannot be restored (even by magic) until the creature has been treated with long-term care and has eaten twice as much food as is necessary to sustain it for one day (twice 1 lb. of food for a Medium creature). As long as a creature has damage due to starvation, it is fatigued. Creatures who are naturally exempt from eating are unaffected by hungry grass.

Nepenthe (CR 6): This pitcher plant grows only in the most obscure of wilds, where it is sought by many a brokenhearted adventurer—it is well-known to be the key ingredient in a drug which mends a wounded heart. The living nepenthe emits overpowering odors which cannot be later recalled. Aroma of nepenthe is a poison gas extending 30 feet from the plant; it differently affects two groups of potential victims (see sidebar, below).

True Mandrake (CR 11): This plant has broad, dark green, glossy leaves, yellow flowers, and red berries. Its roots bear a vague resemblance to a humanoid figure, including a gaping mouth and beady eyes. If the plant is pulled from the ground, its mouth opens wide and emits a shriek equivalent to *wail of the banshee* (DC 23) as it dies. This is a spell-like effect (CL 17th). Mandrakes grow only in spots where many creatures have died and been left to rot in the same place—as a result, many societies hold the erroneous belief that it grows only beneath gallows.

AROMA OF NEPENTHE

Type poison, inhaled; **Save** Fortitude DC 19

Onset 1 round; **Frequency** 1/round for 2 rounds

Initial Effect extraordinary *modify memory* (CL 15th) to forget noticing the plant (if small enough to fit into the acid-filled bell of the nepenthe, instead extraordinary *suggestion* [CL 15th] that the bell is a good place to rest); **Secondary Effect** unconsciousness for 1 minute; **Cure** 1 save

Culture of Faerie

Faerie is vast and diverse, but certain trends remain consistent across much of the place. The most pivotal aspect of the Otherworld is the primal magic of nature. Although it does not have one unified culture, its cultures are all shaped to one extent or another by the fey, the dominant life-form in these realms. Non-fey often form enclaves or whole realms distinct from the Courts, but can rarely escape their influence entirely. A few others, such as treants, instead integrate themselves into fey culture for most of their lives and only occasionally seek community exclusively among their own kind. Faerie dragons generally think of themselves as Seelie and firbolg giants sometimes follow the Wild Hunt, for example.

Magical beasts, linnorms, true dragons, and hags are sometimes more social when they reside beyond the mortal-dominated realms of Terra. The distance from mortal distractions (whether troublesome heroes or villains, easy victims, or inviting pawns) often results in these creatures establishing more stable homes for themselves than usual while they reach out to Terra in a more limited fashion (either in a more organized, efficient, and far-reaching way than usual or more in a more restlessly casual way, depending on the creature's personality).

Trade: Unlike some planar regions, which have complex economies built on favors, souls, or coin, Faerie has a fairly light economy. While there is a minor degree of soul trade and cash transactions, especially in Peristan, most trade is in the form of services and magical treasures.

War: Most warfare in Faerie takes place between the Demesne Courts, fomorian warlords, and linnorms. All these groups fiercely contest all other claims to their individual realms, so most of them are engaged in some kind of conflict the majority of the time. These land-conscious groups tend to even limit the influence of other power groups that aren't interested much in land, but the tension tends to be far less dramatic unless the other court tries to dominate the landed group (which has been rare lately, but was once very common).

Groups such as the Seelie Court, Unseelie Court, Wild Hunt, and some true dragons wage wars that are at least as ideological as they are pragmatic. None are especially concerned about the area of their claims, but rather about control of important sites, artifacts, and other prizes. The Wild Hunt seeks both renown and to embrace the glorious, visceral power of the hunt. Their assaults might be more properly compared to storms, but unlike most storms, which simply release energy pent up in atmospheric imbalance, the Hunt's rampages also release energy pent up in spiritual imbalance. The Wild Hunt sometimes ends up radically altering the course of major wars this way, so their attention is often sought by leaders who fear they are likely to lose a war without some kind of major upset.

The Dance of Light and Darkness: A cold war of intrigue and subterfuge between the Seelie and Unseelie Courts constantly threatens to break into open conflict. Their open actions are almost never directly against each other in Ladinion, for if these superpowers committed themselves to such a fight the consequences for both and for the rest of the Mortal Coil could be disastrous. Instead, they work through proxies, including Demesne Courts, Blood Courts, and sometimes magical beasts, plants, dragons, or giants. In some cases, such as in the time of King Gwythr and King Vindos II during the Era of Empires, relative dominance between the Two Courts has been left up to the result of personal duels between the sovereigns in order to avoid open war.

DRAGONS

Most dragons are decidedly set apart from other cultures of the Otherworld, even the diverse societies of fey. The primary exceptions are faerie dragons and pseudodragons, which are amenable to the Seelie Court; linnorms, with a dark pact with the Unseelie Court; and jabberwocks, generally bound in service to one of several major Faerie Courts and separated from most other dragons for their powerful links to fey.

Faerie Dragons and Pseudodragons

The faerie dragons and their close relatives the pseudodragons are descended directly from the famous Seelie Observer Nathair Sgiathach and his dead mate Taeliquist, an ill-fated daughter of Tiamat. As with their father and lord, these tiny dragon species combine a force of will much like that of their larger cousins with an unusual levity and self-consciousness that sets them apart from other dragons. They do not bridge the gap between fey and wyrm so much as ignore both.

Faerie dragons and pseudodragons do not make up a faction to speak of among the fey, though they generally follow the lead of Nathair if the Prince of Nonce indicates his own position in matters; as their whims dictate, they may attach themselves individually or in small groups to some cause or personage of the Courts (especially the Seelie and certain Blood Courts) until they are either bored or dissatisfied with their efforts.

Linnorms

In sharp contrast to the minor dragons, linnorms are among the most selfish, dangerous, and destructive denizens of Faerie. Although they have been creeping and forcing their way through the edges of the Otherworld since time immemorial, linnorms emerged as a major force upon the arrival of some of the greatest of their number in the early Days of Antiquity.

Bound in contentious and bitter fealty to the elder linnorm Gottenrvnr Two-Tongues and his lackies, the

linnorms of Faerie must follow his lead in agreements with the Unseelie in order avoid death by his own teeth. They are only moderately placated by the opportunity he offers them to find land and some moderate (if tense) respect among the fey. The many linnorms unsatisfied with the somewhat limited lairs available in and near Unseelie realms must instead fight constantly to win and hold their own realms from the likes of giants, mighty beasts, Demesne Court fey, and occasionally other rivals such as Seelie fey or other dragons. They have a special enmity with the normally-reserved fey of the Watchers of the Current, who avidly strike at linnorms at every opportunity.

True Dragons

Rarer in Faerie than in the Fleeting Realm, true dragons nevertheless sometimes appear as great allies or rivals to different fey groups and occasionally seek to establish themselves as major figures of Faerie in their own right. Most arrive when beguiled by the ephemeral beauty of Faerie, which often takes the form of curious fey or mischievous faerie dragons. Tales recount that such tomfoolery is a favorite trick of Nathair Sgiathach himself. Once in Faerie, these dragons choose to stay surprisingly often, either because they have succumbed to its enchanted nature, or because they are simply too stubborn to leave after they have been drawn in.

Resident dragons retain much of the brutal practicality that is intrinsic to their mindset, but even so adapt to the wildness of their neighbors with relative ease. Without an active and present patron, these dragons forge alliances and animosities as their individual natures dictate. Few achieve marked prominence.

FEY

While most fey races have their own cultures, these cultures are mostly offshoots of the greater whole of common fey society. Of all creature types, fey come closest to having a shared culture and worldview. The most basic underpinning of this shared culture is a result of their shared biology: all fey are beings linked to some external force, to a greater or lesser extent. As a result, even the most selfish and aloof of fey cannot escape the influence of the thing to which they are bound. Each is by definition a part of something larger than itself.

Bonds

The majority of fey take their bond as a simple guide to life or pleasure, living in touch with it because doing so is the most natural thing in the world to them. This is why a satyr keeps to his bond of sex and revelry, or why an ora watches over her bond, the dreams of others. These fey often live their lives like other beings, seeking sustenance, reproduction, power, and socialization, seen through the lens of their particular bonds. Other fey, particularly

powerful ones such as daoine sidhe, see their bond as a right to rule, and so draw on its power as a king draws wealth and influence from his kingdom.

Most fey, perhaps all, are bound specifically to nature or some aspect of it. Consequently, the mainstream fey culture fixates on nature as an issue of greatest gravity. This fixation manifests in many different ways—it might be hard to notice, but it is rarely absent altogether. Powerful fey generally see themselves as the rightful caretakers, rulers, or paragons of the natural order. Some carry this assurance with arrogance, others simply act as one of the more uncommon bit players in the workings of the world, and still others fall somewhere in between. The view most take on the natural order is as a cycle, the Great Cycle.

The Great Cycle: Time is a circle. Life is a ring. Birth and death are but two steps in an endless dance. The fey are agents or exemplars of this cycle, the leaders of the dance. Just like all parts of nature, and nature itself, they grow, age, die, and are reborn again. For the cultured or philosophical fey and those who follow them, these linked truths are the only absolutes – subjectivity encompasses all else in shades of gray and gives the fey relatively little room or reason to judge their peers on the grounds of conventional morals or ethics.

However, many fey do feel qualified to judge others based on their place in relation to the Great Cycle. They will shun, toy with, or even attack those they consider to be hindrances or liabilities to the natural order. Fey philosophers often argue fiercely over whether the more unusual fey, such as oras (linked to dreams) or peris (associated with the Realities Beyond) can be considered truly part of nature. In some cases, mainstream fey will attack foes of nature out of conscious fear for the natural order and/or the power they draw from it. Conversely, antipathy may be based more on political expediency—a fey can find ways to claim his enemies are enemies of nature as a way to unite other fey against them.

Other times, though, not even a thought is required. Most fey instinctively sense what may threaten their bond, and will lash out in blind fear against it. For example, aberrations and many undead elicit automatic, visceral loathing from fey. Any proof of association with such beings is enough to destroy any fey's chances for respect, or even continued life, among other fey. Certain other beings produce similar, if less extreme, reactions.

While some fey leaders rely on more conventional methods of rule, such as charisma or raw power, many need to convince fey sages and courtiers to support them in order to cement political power. To this end, leaders demonstrate how their rule moves the Great Cycle forward. Seelie dignitaries guide their charges in the steps toward rebirth, growth, and strength. They opine that nature needs to be helped to improve, grow, and live. At the same time, their Unseelie counterparts plunder the lives and

resources around them, dooming their enemies and those too feeble to defend themselves to decline, weakness, and ultimately death, all the while claiming that life has grown out of control. The Watchers of the Current and those among the more introspective sects of the Wild Hunt tend to advocate a view of the Great Cycle as a whole unit that demands balanced influence from all sides. The Demesne Courts maintain (ostensibly) that their territories reflect the best or truest examples of the Great Cycle in motion and may use that claim as justification for spreading their brand of environment at the expense of others. Still other courts have their own rhetoric on the Great Cycle.

Common Fey

The majority of common fey consider themselves subject to one or more faerie courts, most often one of the Two Courts. While fey generally idealize their court, they do not make the court the focus of their lives. Rather, they look upon the courts as embodying ideals which they are not fit to live up to. For some fey, it is a matter of being unwilling to make the sacrifices necessary to do so; others are simply not able to do it; still others merely go through the motions of respect as it is socially expedient. They generally settle for respecting the actions and decrees of the court and exhibiting a preference for the court's ideals. Consequently, for most fey, their court allegiance does not shape most of their actions.

For example, even though creative acts are associated with the Seelie, a typical Unseelie-aligned common fey will not avoid them all. Rather, her allegiance to the Unseelie means that she respects the power and goals of the Unseelie and heeds the words of the Queen of Air and Darkness. Common Unseelie make a habit of destruction, death, and decay, but only as it suits their personal whims and desires. Those few fey who hold their court's ideals more strongly usually join the aristocracy.

Fey Aristocracy

To common fey, being an aristocrat (particularly in the Two Courts) is something like taking vows of chastity and poverty in order to gain power would be for a mortal. Being an aristocrat is something most any fey will respect, but its power comes with costs that most fey are simply not willing or able to pay. Examples of these costs include limitations on behavior (Seelie aristocrats must avoid destructive acts), expending resources to win the favor of superiors (many require exorbitant gifts or perilous quests), and the responsibility of political power and ruling other fey.

Many fey aristocrats, particularly daoine sidhe, maintain support structures in the form of clans which allow them the influence and resources necessary to devote themselves to pursuing political power in Faerie. Culturally, the majority of fey aristocrats devote themselves heart and

soul to a particular court. Their advancement within the court is directly proportional to their ability to live up to the ideals of that court.

However, a significant minority of aristocrats succeed by way of their ability to take part in any court that is advantageous. They pay lip service to the ideals of the court in order to gain power, but their clan remains politically neutral or at least malleable, able to shift its allegiances quickly as circumstance requires. Essentially, these courtiers are interested in power for themselves or their clan rather than to fulfill any particular ideology. This is not to say that they are categorically untrustworthy. The independent clans generally depend on the structure of the courts to exercise and extend their power, so they usually adhere strongly to their oaths of fealty once they are made. Though a minority, independent clans collectively lay claim to roughly half the lands of the fey and so true believers in their courts must deal with them regardless of their opinions on independence.

The courtiers of Faerie divide their time between work and play to differing degrees—some obsess over their duties; others ignore them and absorb themselves in pleasure or intrigue. Work constitutes protecting or encouraging the cycles of nature in whatever way the court deems best. Play constitutes dancing, reveling, holding contests, and debate. These frequent debates have given rise to many of the less literal interpretations of metaphysics and history which have gained popularity among the courts (for most fey, there is more to truth than facts).

Alignment

As the fey's concern is for their own visceral bonds rather than the lofty ideals of many mortal cultures, the fair folk can seem utterly amoral as a whole. They often see mortal views of alignment as pointless artificial constructs. Unlike a mortal, a fey's alignment rarely affects its fate after death; concern for her afterlife thus factors little in a fey's worldview. Some fey go so far as to ignore alignment completely. However, even then, a fey always has an alignment just like any other creature.

Fey are more apt to define what is "right" by what is in accord with their bond. Since they have a wide variety of ideas on that topic (though the issue often gets colored by the concept of the Great Cycle), any given fey's notion of what is right likewise varies widely from any other fey's. As a whole, fey are equally likely to have any alignment.

Mortals commonly mistake fey for having similar ethics and morals thanks to their perception of some fey's particular facet of nature. For example, a fey that encourages family structures may be mistaken for good-aligned even if it nothing of the sort. In truth, most fey's morality and ethics are prone to exceptions, even moreso than those of humen. Even for the fiercest adherents of the Great Cycle, who worry for the needs of nature as a whole

before all else, the needs of the ideal nature rarely lines up well with any one alignment (or indeed the beliefs of other fey). Accordingly, fey of any alignment can be found in every court of Faerie.

Occasionally, a fey believes that the best thing for nature is a strong infusion of a particular alignment. For example, the little-known Prince of Submission feels that if more sentient beings submitted to the orderly goodwill of Lawful Good, nature would not be as threatened as it is, and could function more efficiently. Fey like this seem at first to be like any mortal devoted to an alignment ideal, but there is an important distinction—a fey with faith in an alignment generally sees that alignment as a means to an end, not as an end unto itself.

Relations with Humen

Fey usually see mortals either as children of the gods (a status which may merit loathing, fear, distrust, apathy, or in rare cases respect, depending on the gods and fey in question) or as the descendants of lost and foolish fey. Their most common attitude toward mortals is distrust, although they are attracted to demonstrations of remarkable talent or skill. Fey usually avoid large groups of mortals, especially cities. Big and complex mortal societies, especially those that wield higher technologies, are seen as either annoying rivals for control of the land or blights on the face of nature by most fey; Seelie fey generally avoid these places, while Unseelie, Wild, and Demesne fey may avoid them or attempt to ruin them.

Most fey find the mortal capacity to indirectly shape fey realms to be a constant source of aggravation. Any alteration of the landscape can create an echo in Faerie that alters the playing field of the fey factions nearby and may inadvertently have catastrophic consequences. Some fey choose to use this to their advantage, attempting to coax mortals into taking actions that will benefit them. For example, a plains-dwelling daoine sidhe at war with a river nymph may offer a great boon to a mortal dam-builder if he will block the nymph's river despite the enchanted animals and dangerous fey she sends to stop him.

Seelie are most often willing to help mortals because they see in mortals a great potential to work in harmony in nature. These fey will continue to pursue the goal of harmony even if that potential very often goes unrealized. When there is success, it is beautiful. A land tended by druids or shamans who lead respectful people is a land of exceptional vibrance and stability, empowering the Seelie while benefiting most of the resident life.

Unseelie, on the other hand, take a fatalistic approach. They know mortals usually invade and disrupt the natural realms the Unseelie draw power from, and so many Unseelie assume that is the inevitable result of mortal society-building—any time a mortal group gets stable enough, they hold, it eventually leads to over-development

and trouble for the fey.

Some powerful fey such as zephyrs and verdant princes, especially those who do not belong to specific courts, encourage mortals to see them as local gods. They do not often demand worship, but they do demand offerings and reverence in exchange for good weather, the prevention of a volcanic eruption, or other protections against the dangers of nature. Such a situation often leads to conflict with the followers of true gods. Occasionally, a nature spirit that helps or harms mortals will attract worship from them it does not want, either because it does not want to earn the ire of true divinities or because it wants to be left alone.

Nearly all fey agree that mortal roads (not mere trails) are bothersome, since they are essentially land useless for any purpose other than making travel easier for sapient beings. Similar attitudes also apply to mortal architecture. So, road-builders (and other builders who work out in pristine nature) are often the subject of fey pranks and more dangerous opposition. It is a battle that is difficult to win once mortals start gaining ground; the more civilization spreads into an area, the less nature there is to support fey defenders. Even after construction is complete, hostile fey (of all courts) are commonly found at crossroads in the wilderness; they are especially attracted to such places as symbols of transition from nature to civilization that are surrounded on all sides by nature.

Relations with Other Beings

As a rule, fey are aloof from concerns far beyond their sylvan realms. They have many enemies, but they have little cause to deal with those enemies directly. Thanks to the lack of recent conflict, as well as the isolation of Faerie, the fey have managed to keep their activities and interests largely secret from mortals and extraplanar beings.

Aberrations: As creatures utterly alien to natural life and death, the fey unfalteringly see aberrations as the most horrid monstrosities imaginable. Most fey think they have no right exist in Creation and seek to destroy or banish any aberrations they find, but a few extremist Seelie believe that they can be integrated into nature with dramatic enough mutation.

Elementals: The natives of the Elemental Realities are often seen by fey as tools, nothing more and nothing less. They are called upon when useful, perhaps compensated, and otherwise paid little heed. As an exception, the powers surrounding the Elder Elemental Eye (including the Princes of Elemental Evil) are greatly reviled and opposed by fey powers wherever possible, as these elementals wish to eradicate the present world in favor of the supremacy of raw elements (which the fey have little place among).

Gnomes: Said by some to be long-ago descended from fey exiles, gnomes have since proven themselves to be amusing enough to be invited back from time to time.

Lycanthropes: Although lycanthropy seems to impose

the influence of nature on mortals, that is not always the case. Many common forms of lycanthropy, which twist the souls of their victims into the forms of specific alignments, are little connected to or influenced by nature, but rather mortal perceptions of nature. A werewolf is usually more representative of mortal fears of man-eating animals, akin to a fiendish wolf, than it is a reflection of true wolves. As a result, fey attitudes vary widely as they do on all things strongly bound to Ideals. There are rumors of other sorts of lycanthropy which are linked more directly to nature and may be respected as such by the fey.

Other Faerie Residents: Fey tend to view non-fey inhabitants of Faerie as lesser beings. Those they have greater affinity for, especially animals, plants, and vermin, are regarded almost like children. Faerie dragons, firbolgs, some magical beasts, and some monstrous humanoids are seen similarly, if with a bit more respect. However, some beasts and monstrous humanoids are also distrusted insofar as they are bound to gods or cosmic entities which the fey in question find distasteful. Finally, fomorian giants and linnorms tend to be viewed as troublesome rivals (which the fey sometimes underestimate). Many fey are especially suspicious of linnorms, but nothing has yet come to light that would sour their alliance with the Unseelie.

Other Dragons: Fey have very mixed feelings about true dragons. They find these beings to be magnificent examples of raw physical power and magical beauty, but also find their extreme alignments and overweening greed to be annoying. Additionally, the huge amount of land and food required to sustain most dragons can often lead to resentment on the part of local fey.

Other Giants: Giants are usually seen as short-sighted fools, since their respect for nature rarely goes beyond raw elements. As exceptions, forest giants, ocean giants, and a handful of other races are much closer to the vital and magical world of the fey, and are seen nearly as equals.

Other Outsiders: Many denizens of the Realms Beyond, such as devils and slaad, tend to be treated with open contempt by the fey and may serve as adversaries even to fey of similar alignment.

Fey typically deal better with genies, azatas, agathions, night hags, and titans (and demons, rakshasas, and formians to a lesser extent) than other outsiders. These groups are generally better at understanding the fey's bonds, or deal well with the physical nature of fey. The hags of Hades may serve as allies or antagonists of fey, but their relationships (especially with the Unseelie) tend to be closer than any other between fey and the Realms Beyond.

Undead: The fey often fear and loath infectious undead as perverse mockeries of nature. However, restless dead who do not spread their curse may be ignored or even elicit sympathy from fey they do not bother. A few fey, such as many of the Unseelie House of Stormwind, put the undead they find to use as slaves to attack equally

reviled enemies. Additionally, the fringe group called the Harbingers of the Undying Season glorifies undeath.

Powers: The fey generally have a dim view of the powers of the Realms Beyond – more often than not, they distrust, resent, or fear the gods and their meddling, and often feel likewise about cosmic entities. In fact, some fey are terrified by clerics and holy or unholy symbols, recoiling from these things or lashing out at them on sight. The strongest root of this distrust lies in the way gods may draw fey souls away from the world they know and the endless cycle of reincarnation, bringing them into the afterlives in the alien-seeming Realms Beyond.

As an exception to this general trend, fey often have respect for Powers of nature. However, they usually regard nature gods as important allies or even peers, rather than figures worthy of worship. Semuanya of the lizardfolk, most elf gods except Lolth, Skerrit of the centaurs, Surminare of the selkies, and the Ancient Titans are among those who deal well with the fey as whole. Conversely, several Powers are viewed with special disdain by most fey, including notorious and perverse Lolth, treacherous Lilith, disruptive Panzuriel, and meddlesome Zugtgmoym.

HUMANOIDS

Faerie's variety of humanoids and monstrous humanoids, including fomorian and firbolg giants, hags, centaurs, and spriggans, generally stand apart from the Faerie Courts but are likely to maintain open lines of communication with at least a few factions with similar outlooks. Hags and spriggans generally have dealings with the Unseelie Court; centaurs, with the Seelie.

Faerie Friends

Sometimes, a Faerie native will vouch for an interloper's behalf, blessing them with the status of faerie friend. The benefits thereof are largely intangible, such as fey showing somewhat less aloofness and condescension toward such a person. The faint supernatural air about a faerie friend alerts fey to his initiation into fey matters, and means they consider him a more potentially valuable ally as well as a more potentially dangerous threat, depending on how they view the group of fey he has earned friendship with, making them more friendly or more hostile as appropriate.

This status depends simply on the wish of at least one Faerie native. Most fey will bestow this boon only after one has performed a notable service for them or else dwelt in Faerie for an extended period of time (traditionally a year and a day, three years, or seven years).

Firbolgs

Unlike the fomorian, the firbolg is a being of grace as well as might. Their culture is well-regarded by the fey and mortals alike for its musical and magical accomplishments, and they pay great reverence to their druid and cleric

religious leaders as well as their warrior-poet kings and talented magical craftsmen.

The firbolg race is native to both Faerie and Terra, tracing its roots back to giants who took refuge in Faerie from genocidal dragons during the conflict between dragons and giants at the dawn of the Mortal Coil. Most firbolgs display a very fey-like pragmatism and aloofness. They share the fey's appreciation for the myth of Queen Gloriana and most revere the Wild Hunt.

Fomorians

Fomorians are among the most unusual inhabitants of Faerie, said to be descended from giant allies of the fey extending back to the reign of ancient Queen Gloriana. They often come into conflict with fey, as they do not share many of the fey's taboos and are much more concerned with matters of ownership and temporal power than most fey are. Long ago, the fomorians formed a major part of the Unseelie Court. But they grew weak and decadent, apparently genetic dead-ends, and were cast out when King Vindos II (predecessor to the Queen of Air and Darkness) took his throne. He attempted to eradicate them all; they fought back desperately with eldritch technology and strange new forms of magic and managed to carve out a niche at the fringes of Faerie. When Vindos was succeeded by the Queen of Air and Darkness and she let off persecuting them in favor of other concerns, they began to expand their power again, this time outside Court society.

Though renowned for their paranoia and tempers, fomorians are not often fools. They are perfectly capable of forming alliances with other fomorians and non-fomorians alike as it suits their goals. In a sense, it can be said that they threaten the fey's dominance of Faerie, but only in the most prosaic terms. Their coalitions and crude empires cover a significant fraction of Faerie's lands, but they little threaten the power of the greatest Faerie Lords. Only the Environmental and local courts often conflict with the fomorians, since the other courts claim little land as their own. The Seelie Court see opposing the fomorians as beneath them, while the Unseelie wish to acquire the giants as servants. As a result of their methods and their ambivalent relationship with other Faerie power groups, some mortal poets see them as a kind of reflection of mortal civilization and its ambivalent relationship with the natural world.

MAGICAL BEASTS

Magical beasts, particularly those native to Faerie, tend to live in animalistic terms, hunting and foraging for most of their time. However, unlike intelligent plants, which generally obsess over the natural order in their immediate area, magical beasts tend to be more social and concern themselves with personal glory, relationships, and

pursuing abstract ideals aside from natural balance, such as good or chaos.

Unicorns, pegasi, and a few others are so well-integrated into fey society that they sometimes adopt archfey or Powers of their own species as their lords much as fey often do. Others, such as the thrasfyr, are bound to serve powerful masters and vanish quietly to the fringes of Faerie when left to their own devices.

Among the most dangerous magical beasts in Faerie are krakens, who are both power-hungry and mighty enough to overpower most other beings aside from fey nobles and giant warlords. These vile and mysterious creatures lurk in the deep seas of Faerie, away from most fey concerns and the influence of most beings aside from a few fomorians and archfey associated with the Court of Coral.

PLANTS

While most plants lack minds, much less culture, some such as treants have both. These plants often live very simply and concern themselves with the balance of nature around them even more obsessively than the fey do.

A few intelligent plants, especially the treants and myconids, mimic fey social structures and even have blood courts ruled by plant Faerie Lords. These plants associate with (or choose to avoid) the various fey courts much as any fey might, though they tend to be less selfish than most fey and more willing to shoulder the burdens of a court title.

REGIONAL VARIATION

Naturally, the specifics of Faerie culture vary from place to place and time to time. Described here are the most significant ways in which the threads of culture among fey and their neighbors tend to diverge from those described above in various climates and terrains.

Warm Environments

Here, the seasons are often defined more by the precipitation than the temperature. In the wet season, Seelie are at their strongest; in the dry season, Unseelie grow in influence and take their toll, often slowly and gradually. The most dangerous of Unseelie are often bound to disease, drought, poison, and starvation. If there is a monsoon or other storm season, the Unseelie tend to draw power from it as well, but in a flashier and more sudden manner than they do from drought.

Temperate Environments

Temperate regions experience the greatest swings in fey power. In summer, the Seelie are generally dominant; in winter, the Unseelie are. Seelie tend to be more populous, but the Unseelie tend to be more individually powerful, and many of the fey in these climes associate with neither of these courts. Conflict between courts is common, and

Time is a circle. Life is a ring. Birth and death are but two steps in an endless dance.

may happen at predictable intervals (such as the equinoxes) or sporadically.

A notable variation of temperate climate is one in which there is a hot, dry summer and mild, wet winter. The fey of these regions, if involved in the Two Courts, tend to treat their opposites more with contempt and derision than with any actual malice. Direct conflict is far rarer than avoidance. In this particular climate, environments are more varied than usual and the ecology often adapts to take advantage of brush-fires which occur during the dry summers. Since fires are important in these places, fey here have a stronger affinity with fire than elsewhere. Many plants here are dependent on fire for reproduction, fertilization, and removing their dead fellows. So, the traditional battle of fey against foolish fire-spreading mortals in many environments is here reversed, where mortal fire-fighting unwittingly stifles the local ecology until, when fire does finally come, it is disastrously large, devastating to even the fire-loving plants.

Cold Environments

Cold areas are like temperate areas in winter—they are largely dominated by Unseelie-aligned fey. There are few Seelie, many of whom become dormant or retreat to Faerie during the long cold seasons. In fact, most fey without Unseelie allegiance are not devoted to the Seelie either, instead favoring the Wild Hunt or one of the Demesne Courts. Even the most kind and gentle of the Seelie tend to embrace the power of cold and repose here.

Linnorms are at their most prominent in cold climes, as are many magical beasts and hags. Similarly, fomorians, although not especially fond of cold, are known to build some of their mightiest fortifications in icebergs and other features of a cold environment.

Caverns

Cut off from the traditional annual seasons, subterranean fey tend to be less devoted to the Great Cycle, more often straying into interest in the complete preservation or extinction of things. As a result, the Harbingers of the Undying Season tend to carry out their life- and death-defying operations more freely in these places. Similarly, the members of the frigne Seelie House of Worms are at greater liberty to experiment with the potential of aberrations to be remade into forms compatible with the natural order.

Also prominent in caverns are the fomorians, who often influence the fey with their strange fixations and

magic. Their strongholds make use of the dark secrets often hidden beneath the earth to carve out great realms guarded by fortresses of iron and eldritch wards.

Deserts

Desert fey tend to be strongly split along Seelie-Unseelie lines. The Unseelie are strong and domineering, whereas the Seelie are weak but approachable and exceptionally

helpful to all living things.

A few of their number, however, blur the line between the Two Courts by drawing on the desert's power of stasis. Most visibly, the Unseelie House of Stormwind includes fey who use the sand's petrifying, desiccating qualities to halt growth and regrowth before it can gain a foothold. Perhaps guiding Stormwind or working in secret with them, the Harbingers of the Undying Season are also

The Rhyming Song

Time is at once vitally important and virtually meaningless to the fey. Between their nigh-endless lives and the distorted time of Faerie, history as mortals reckon it seems but a fleeting fancy. A fey may well spend a century or longer on a flight of whimsy without once thinking of the past or future as he goes. However, the patterns formed by history's interminable cycles are extremely important to the fey in their more thoughtful moments, for it allows them to predict what is to come. Not only do they record notable seasons and events in ballads and epic poetry, but they think of the passage of the seasons (and all of history) as an ever-changing, ever-rhyming song. Events may not repeat themselves, but they echo each other in remarkable ways that fey seers can read with piercing clarity. However, their perception of the past (and thus, the future) is never wholly agreed upon; every important story has many mutually exclusive tellings.

Below is a brief, simplified version of a common plot derived from the ballads of the sidhe bards.

The Time Before Time

There is no such thing as an ultimate beginning as far as the fey are concerned. However, the earliest event that all fey can reckon is the destruction of the previous Creation. Even reality is subject to death and rebirth, after all.

The Unified Court Period

Age of Innocence: From the rotting loam of the previous Creation, the Seed of Life sprouts forth what is now Ladinion. At its heart appear the first fey, the fenghuangs. They help shape primeval nature while the Mortal Coil grows into a full-fledged plane. Life, role, and species are fluid and magical as natural laws develop. Then, outside influences begin to disrupt the balance and the Tree of Life divides into distinct layers. The wisest fenghuangs create new beings bound to the nature so that they might protect it, including the daoine sidhe led by the Old Seelie Court and King Fintan.

The Lost Age: Fey have mixed interactions with the Elder Ones and other primeval denizens of Terra. While the fey prefer the vital realms of Faerie, Terra is a dark, relatively blank slate for the Elder Ones, who create many wonders within. Fascinated by these strangers and curious about their origins, Fintan's consort Cessair nearly causes disaster when her exploration of everything beyond Faerie reaches the Void Beyond. For her recklessness, she is banished from Faerie along with her followers. The *Second War of Law and Chaos* begins in the Realms Beyond, leading to conflicts between vaati, qliphothim, and other interlopers, although at first their collateral damage is manageable. Meanwhile, the earliest gods appear and many Elder Ones vanish (often mysteriously) from the known Cosmos.

The Elder Gate: Perhaps spurred by the rise of new gods, the *Second War of Law and Chaos* spreads in earnest to the Mortal Coil, and Fintan finds his tactics and diplomacy unable to curb the devastation. He steps down as Seelie King. With deft skill, his successor Queen Gloriana dances in and out of alliance and conflict with Elder Ones, vaati, and others to successfully preserve the interests of Faerie. Eventually, however, Cessair and her followers return with a new threat. Seeking the vanished Elder Ones, they construct the world-spanning Elder Gate to look beyond Creation's edge. Instead of Elder Ones, the Elder Gate allows an Old One-like force of the Void Beyond called the Elder Horror into Creation. It rips holes in space and time across Terra. Queen Gloriana closes the Gate with the Elder Seal, but perishes in the process. The damage can only be partly undone, shaping the modern Void Between the Stars and erasing nearby societies from history. The power of the Old Seelie Court is forever diminished.

The Scouring: The *Second War of Law and Chaos* reaches a fever pitch while the fey struggle to recover from the Elder Gate event with the guidance of Queen Rhiannon I. Eventually, the vaati grow so desperate that they unleash the *Rod of Law*, which scours life from many worlds, cripples both Law and Chaos, and ends the war. A movement of fey against Rhiannon coalesces around many powerful fenghuangs and an archfey calling himself King Vindos I who dispute Rhiannon's authority. Named Unseelie by the Old Seelie Court, these fey devastate world after world in an attempt to root out all lingering threats to fey power. Perhaps the most visible of these threats are true dragons and giants; Vindos attempts to remove them by fueling their fierce rivalry into open war.

active in the area, associated with the iconic mummy.

Additionally, powerful magical beasts such as sphinxes, phoenixes, and thunderbirds also roam the deserts of Faerie. They may have a decisive influence on conflicts between the Two Courts here, although the direction they sway it varies more with the individual and what they need at the moment rather than based on the species of the beast. A thunderbird that is hurt or angry tends to side with the Unseelie, whereas one in a pleasant disposition may help the Seelie or even lead them.

Forests

Forest fey tend to be very plentiful and strong, although the Two Courts, especially the Unseelie, seem to flourish less than the rest. Similarly, numerous non-fey factions of Faerie are most active in forests. Faerie dragons, linnorms, and many magical beasts can all shape the society of these regions; usually, inhabitants either act more in accord to them or are more vigilant to resist them, as appropriate.

Giants face a special problem. They appreciate the resources of forests, but often find them too restrictive to move about in freely. As a result, many firbolgs only settle in sparse forests. Fomorians, on the other hand, have

been known to thin forests with rampages of destruction, logging, or fires before taking up residence within.

Hills

Hill fey are especially diverse, in part because hills overlap with many other environments. Fey tend to isolate themselves in places like this, only interacting with mortals when they are disturbed. In such places, magical beasts tend to be the more active and visible Faerie natives, followed by giants and dragons.

Lakes

The fey of freshwater bodies tend toward selfishness a bit more than most, but Seelie fey are decidedly more prominent here than Unseelie. Among the most innately fleeting of environments, lakes and ponds generally harbor fey with a more mortal-like conception of time unless the body of water in question is especially deep (and thus, long-lasting). This leads them to be less separate from everyday events and more apt to interact with mortals, whether for good or ill.

Greater selfishness and increased awareness of time makes these fey, particularly the Seelie, more dangerous

The Rhyming Song (Continued)

The Splintered Courts Period

Rhiannon's Peace: Yi, Gloriana's former champion, slays the Unseelie leaders and disgraces the fenghuangs. Queen Rhiannon I, her rule now all-but undisputed, exiles Yi for murder. She marshals the fey to a semblance of their previous eminence in over nature and fosters goodwill with mortals by initiating some of them into the fey world. Among these mortals are giant refugees from a great war with the dragons; their flight eventually contributes to a peace forged by Good powers from both sides.

Reign of Danu: Gods begin establishing dominance in Terra, though they seem a small matter early on. After Rhiannon I's death, Queen Danu cements the fey's camaraderie with gods and eventually draws widespread worship from mortals, claiming divine power for her court. The *Wars of Divine Succession* begin.

The Battles of Magh Tuiredh: As Danu and the other new fey gods begin to care more for their worshipers than for their Faerie realms, their servant Aeval leads the Seelie in rejecting them. Danu and her children (the Tuatha Dé Danann) depart for the Realms Beyond and Aeval becomes queen. Soon, the Tuatha Dé attempt to lay claim to giantish realms for their worship; after a Pyrrhic victory in the ensuing *First Battle of Magh Tuiredh*, the gods fall under the slavery of the half-giant god Bres and his Unseelie allies. When the gods gain a new leader in the half-giant Lugh, they gain a true victory in the *Second Battle of Magh Tuiredh*. Despite the giants' loss, the Unseelie's ranks swell with fomorian refugees and leaders. Meanwhile, the Seelie suffer a series of disastrous conflicts with fiendish interlopers. Hoping to overcome the weakness which gave footholds in Faerie to the fiends, Queen Aeval purges all those not of pure fey blood from the Seelie Court; other fey leave in protest.

The Plague War: Taking advantage of the rift among the fey, the great linnorm Gottenrvnr Two-Tongues arrives in Faerie. In exchange for an alliance and the boon of the linnorms' now-infamous death curse, he forces a crude order upon his lesser kin and aids the Unseelie King Tethra, a young half-fey fomorian, against his enemies. Tethra then takes in many of those who left the Seelie Court, including the Wild Hunt. Queen Aeval, hoping to avoid more bloodshed, meets with Tethra, but he assassinates her in an attempt to steal her power. He manages to establish dominion over death and destruction, but the Seelie heir, Caelia, retains the power of vitality and the allegiance of most Seelie. The two begin a bloody war over control of Life and Death and all the Faerie Courts. The fierce conflict weakens the courts as a whole and hampers their resistance to the rising gods in the *Wars of Divine Succession*. Most courts gain a degree of autonomy as they repeatedly change hands, and the Demesne Courts begin to fight violently with each other over control of territory.

and troublesome than usual, since they are even less likely than most to consider how mortals will react to their activities (even ones they consider kind, such as kidnapping them to attend a blissful feast which lasts a week in Faerie, but much longer in mortal time).

Marshes

Within marshes, the line between Seelie and Unseelie is blurrier than usual. Very few fey choose to associate with one or the other exclusively. However, the Unseelie aspects tend to be more dominant. Most fey who interact with mortals—and there are more here than virtually anywhere—are dangerous, yet also social and personal. What fey there are who tend toward Seelie attitudes also tend to be more aloof from individual concerns. Unseelie here include many hags and often work closely with trolls

and other faerie friends. Among all places that harbor linnorms, this is the one where the Unseelie are most likely to treat them with respect.

Mountains

Although there is relatively little on mountain peaks, there are more than a few fey to be found there. Weather fey are especially fond of these places, and the Unseelie Court has a fair presence. The Seelie, however, are scattered and weak in these desolate climes. The fey of these places are reclusive and impersonal for the most part, and only a few of the most malicious Unseelie care to go forth and interact with mortals who come into their environs. Most non-fey inhabitants of Faerie are also surprisingly active in these empty places, especially fomorians, linnorms, and giant eagles and other winged magical beasts.

The Rhyming Song (Continued)

The Warring Courts Period

Caelia's Clemency: Unwilling to throw away any more lives, Queen Caelia eventually issues an offer of clemency to any Unseelie who wishes to rejoin the Seelie. She chooses to turn a blind eye to the affairs of death and decay under Unseelie control unless threatened. Some accept clemency, and the Unseelie Court begins to falter against the gods in the *Wars of Divine Succession*. The Seelie, conversely, are reinvigorated by common ground with nature gods and fellow enemies of the Unseelie. Many pantheons (the Seldarine, Olympians, even the Tuatha Dé Danann), ally with Caelia. Although the Two Courts no longer fight directly, they engage in a tense cold war (the *Dance of Light and Darkness*) over vassal courts.

The Peace of Paradwys: The tiring Queen Caelia slowly restricts her control more and more to Faerie as she relies on the Seelie's close divine allies to deal with any problems in Terra; at the same time, the Unseelie continue to lose their war against the gods and are largely reduced to guerrilla attacks from Faerie. Internal pressures rise when old Tethra is replaced by Queen Vercana, a fiery young fomorian. Soon, armies once arrayed against the gods are arrayed against each other. The *Dance of Light and Darkness* threatens to grow into another great war, and the sage Watcher of the Current, Borlung, steps in. Forging a pact called the *Peace of Paradwys*, he takes stewardship of the Demesne Courts and manages their relations with the Two Courts in an ostensibly fair manner. With lasting peace, Queen Caelia abdicates in favor of the open and creative Rhiannon II, who fosters alliances with mortals by offering some of them the blessings of the fey world.

Vercana's Folly: Queen Vercana and her lackies cannot abide Borlung controlling the Demesnes, so they attack the Watchers of the Current and murder Borlung while Queen Rhiannon II is away in Terra. This sparks another open war, now known as *Vercana's Folly* for distracting the courts at a critical moment. Aberrant monstrosities known as mind flayers appear suddenly around this time in Terra and wreak havoc on its lands while the fey fight each other. Other aberrations, such as aboleths, also rear their heads. Many lesser fey leaders soon come to believe that they cannot afford this war; one by one, they bow out of *Vercana's Folly*. Several, primarily the Demesne Courts, join a league of other courts for mutual protection against Seelie and Unseelie meddling. By the time the *Wars of Divine Succession* draw to a close, the Unseelie Court decides to divert what power it has left to protecting its interests from aberrations. Bereft of many fey pawns, the Two Courts turn to using mortals instead. The Unseelie Prince Vindos, eventually convinced that fomorian weakness allowed their rising aberration foes to gain footholds in Terra, stages a coup in the Unseelie Court which leaves many fomorians dead and forces the rest to flee. He becomes King Vindos II.

The Treaty of Thule: The Watchers Crieddylad and Ngalyod sponsor the *Treaty of Thule*, an agreement of mutual non-aggression in favor of fighting the persistent enemies of Faerie. King Vindos II agrees only on condition of binding Crieddylad to him. She proves invaluable in helping him decimate several worlds with apocalyptic floods. As it becomes increasingly clear that the strategy isn't working, most fey factions withdraw from sponsoring mortals in favor of other approaches. Most prefer guerrilla tactics and sabotage, but Queen Rhiannon II abdicates to make way for the fresh and brilliant King Gwythr, who leads the Seelie in trying a wide variety of novel tactics. Soon, Gwythr frees Crieddylad from Vindos. A battle is fought over her, but the kings eventually agree to single combat to decide her place, repeated at regular intervals, to conserve their military strength for other foes.

Plains

Conflict between the Two Courts and Demesne Courts tends to be particularly polarized and tempestuous on the plains, especially great inland prairies. Periods of calm will often be regularly punctuated with fierce fighting. The borders of plains are more often than not rife with conflict between various fey factions, particularly with desert, forest, and marsh fey.

Seas

The oceans are probably the most diverse of all environments, and consequently the behaviors of the fey here tend to be the most varied. Perhaps the only accurate generalization that can be made of the whole of the seas is that the Two Courts are less prominent here; more respect is paid to the largely-unallied Court of Coral than to any other.

Shores

Areas of land deeply entangled with the sea, as well as areas of sea which are shallow and thereby entangled with land, attract many fey who reside further inland or out to sea. They are drawn there for socialization and to amuse themselves in this liminal space, generally at dawn or dusk. Consequently, this is a place home to especially social and outgoing fey. They also tend to be politically unallied, and so none of the courts have especially strong influence among them with the possible exception of the Court of Shores. Faerie dragons are particularly prominent here, and popular social fixtures among the more chaotic fey, despite rarely lairing close to the sea.

Skies

Despite the relative lack of any ecosystems high above the ground, the forces of Faerie sometimes have significant

presence here. Usually settled around cloud-drifting flying islands, these groups include servants of the Faerie Court of Winds, fomorians dwelling in crystalline towers, silver dragon roosts, and favored perches for winged magical beasts and birds such as rocs.

The Deep

There is little natural life, and few fey, in the depths of the ocean. However, stranger creatures often fill the power vacuum. Fomorians are not rare here or indeed in any part of the sea. Isolated fey communities are much threatened by krakens, perverse giants, dragons, and sometimes elementals and aberrations like aboleths and skum.

Most deep-sea fey here revere either the Court of Coral or the Unseelie Court, and death is dangerously close where life is so very sparse. Although benthic fey are like subterranean fey in that the turning of the seasons has little meaning to them, they have escaped the strong influence of the Harbingers here. Harbingers sometimes use this place as a refuge from elsewhere due to its desolation, but they avoid other fey when they do so.

Waterways

Rivers are among the most bounteous aspects of nature as far as mortals are concerned. As a result, mortals are often highly respectful of river fey, and river fey are often highly respectful of mortals in turn. Fey in this area are usually Seelie (such as nixies) and optimistic about mortals' potential to interact well with the natural world. The Unseelie that are present (such as *baen nighe*) tend to be indirect, temperamental, and especially unfriendly.

The Rhyming Song (Continued)

The Many Courts Period (Modern Period)

The Dance Resumes: While the most fey courts are fighting a losing battle against the aberrations, King Gwythr's Seelie help Gith's Rebellion prepare themselves to overthrow the Illithid Hegemony. Gwythr sacrifices his life to power a spell which accelerates the evolution of the gith people; Titania then becomes Seelie Queen. Not long after, King Vindos II dies mysteriously and is replaced by the Queen of Air and Darkness. The *Dance of Light and Darkness* resumes through mortal puppets, gradually stepping closer and closer to the old devastating stakes. The new Unseelie Queen proves herself by leading her court to put down the ethergaunts, a potentially-dangerous aberration race.

The Present Age: As the Seelie successfully capitalize on fey and mortal allies, the Unseelie begins to lose ground in their ideological struggle. In addition, the Unseelie Court suffers the temporary loss of their primary city-dwelling agents, the insoril, who are kidnapped by unexpectedly resurfacing ethergaunts. Finally, the Harbingers of the Undying Season are again exposed among the Unseelie leadership, heightening the court's currents of paranoia and fear although they try to keep this revelation from their rivals. In this climate, the Seelie are able to achieve a small measure of dominance.

The Song Goes On: Although none can be sure when, it seems Faerie will experience a great change soon. The tenuous superiority of Titania's Seelie cannot last forever, and a sudden dark turn threatens from the uncertain future should the Unseelie become dominant once again.

Using Faerie

Faerie can affect a story and its heroes in small or large ways. Presented here are ideas and advice for using the material in this book in a campaign.

EPISODIC ENCOUNTERS

Faerie's otherworldly atmosphere can often be best exemplified by inserting a mysterious encounter with fey, magical beasts, giants, dragons, or other Faerie monsters into an otherwise unrelated chain of events. Listed below are a variety of archetypal Faerie encounter elements.

Behavior Puzzle

Many fey and fomorian encounters, especially those with fey who serve as guardians and secret-keepers, can be best resolved by learning to follow or exploit the byzantine rules of the fey or fomorian in question. For example, a common compulsion among these creatures is the inability to lie or the inability to speak the truth. A few have taboos which they are pathologically incapable of breaking, or which they will take great pains to uphold. Some of these may even take the form of explicit tests, challenging the heroes to choose the right course of action in a difficulty or misleading situation; more often, a fey or fomorian fills a similar role by happenstance.

Examples: 1. Bog imps never willingly violate their tribal codes; it might be necessary for a band of adventurers to learn the code held by a band of bog imps to pass through an area they control. If the bog imps are too numerous to be fought off by the party, the party might appeal to their taboo against touching iron in order to keep them away. 2. A faerie dragon has taken up residence near a stately manor, causing all manner of mischief; in order to make her leave, one must realize despite her riddling speech that she is only holding out in hopes of obtaining one of the owner's famous apple pies.

Blessing

Seelie fey encourage others to help them by occasionally lavishing rewards upon those who do so, even if the help they gave was unintentional. Likewise, they often prefer to empower others to accomplish their goals, rather than doing the work themselves. Possible blessings include granting wishes, spell-like abilities, qualifying for feats such as Nymph's Kiss^{BOED}, access to the Seelie's unmatched healing arts, and other boons such as the sort granted by nymphs. Many fey prefer to offer blessings to long-term servants, but are more than happy to reward or encourage one-time help. Other courts also help in ways similar to the Seelie, but they are less prone to choose this route.

Examples: 1. Desperately afraid of evil mages intent on enslaving them, a small sisterhood of nymphs offers their favor to whoever dares defy the powerful villains

and save them. 2. A branch of the Court of Coral is outmatched by their Unseelie foes after a bloody battle decimates their army, so as soon as they hear of the party's accomplishments, they send an envoy to offer them a taste of the power of the sea, in the form of a *limited wish*, in exchange for service against the Unseelie Court.

Combat Challenge

Certain fey, magical beasts, dragons, and giants revel in bloodshed and kill for no reason but pleasure or simple greed. Others follow the maxim "might makes right" and fight to determine leadership.

Examples: 1. The party stumbles upon a firbolg warrior or faerie knight in the wilderness, who challenges them to ritual combat on sight; victory determines whether the PCs' wish to pass through will be heeded. 2. A linnorm tries to devour the party and claim their treasure.

Curse

Some of the most popular and effective weapons among fey, hags, and linnorms are curses. Breaking a curse is generally a difficult, potentially puzzling challenge. Suffering a curse can be the result of a minor spat of bad luck or part of learning a hard lesson about respecting the power of nature. Some particularly unforgiving fey, such as some daoine sidhe or wild hunters, will curse mortals on sight in sylvan settings. They may even curse mortals without their knowledge in order to manipulate them from behind the scenes. Spirits of bloodshed and conflict, such as the baen nighe, use this tactic to influence the outcome of battles.

Examples: 1. A mortal accidentally breaks a nymph's taboo by unknowingly entering her sacred grove. As punishment, she curses him to never enjoy the blessings of the earth for a year and a day. Unless he gets a *remove curse* spell cast by a higher-level spellcaster, the victim cannot eat any food grown from soil. It withers away to dust in his mouth. 2. Heroes vanquish a mighty Unseelie countess or dread linnorm, only to discover that the death of this wicked being has left her killers cursed to be painfully vulnerable to future enemies with similar tactics until the curse is dispelled by an even more powerful spellcaster.

Information

Mortals in need of information may find the fey (and to a lesser extent, hags) to be surprisingly useful resources. Fey, being among the longest-lived beings in the Mortal Coil and capable of drawing on multiple lifetimes of memory, can be invaluable sources of information about the past. Sometimes a fey—particularly an elderly and worldly one—will personally remember the hiding of a primeval artifact, the personal motives of a long-forgotten king, or even the establishment of fundamental aspects of the world. Even if they lack such insight personally, fey

often have a much easier time recalling rumors or finding someone who knows the truth of the matter. As such, they make excellent information brokers to even the most experienced of clients.

Examples: 1. In order to prevent the fulfillment of an apocalyptic vision, the party must discover the fate of a long-lost hero, who neither died nor lives still, and get his help in defeating a demon prince he sealed away. The ancient King of the Mountain, nigh-ageless spirit of the soaring peaks where the hero vanished, can reveal the hero's fate, provided a way can be found to rouse the King from his slumber. 2. A little-known godling appears in a major city and demands the return of a stolen artifact or else he will raze the entire area; the only living beings that recall the theft are notorious faerie tricksters who must be bribed for the truth with an equally tantalizing prize.

Innocent Victim

Goodly fey and magical beasts, particularly weak ones most concerned with tending to the welfare of other living things, can make for exceptionally blameless and sympathetic victims for the forces of evil. Common attackers for innocent victims are fomorians, linnorms, chromatic dragons, hags, trolls, and wicked humen. These characters lend themselves well to the elements of blessing, pact, or even seduction.

Examples: 1. A nymph is brutalized by a wicked aristocrat who lays waste to her home in order to get every bit of the valuable wood and spices that grow in the area. 2. A unicorn is hunted by evil trappers intent on harvesting its body parts for alchemical components.

Pact

Fey are often quite pragmatic creatures, willing to pay an appropriate price to get what they want. The special gifts of the fey many times prove a powerful incentive for mortals to do what they ask in the long term. Sometimes, the price may even be as meager as showing the fey proper respect when they offer gifts. However, respect can be more complicated than expected for an inexperienced mortal. Some fey expect deferential speech; some expect that part of the gift be left behind as thanks; and some are mortified at being given mortal crafts as a reward. When fey act with such good will, mortals would be wise to avoid trying to exploit the situation any further than intended; any more may insult the fey or even hurt it, usually with the result of swift and painfully poetic justice.

More often, a fey pact carries a significant price. But unlike a fiend's pact, the price of a fey pact is sometimes well worth paying (although it can become impractical). Other times, particularly when bartered by a lawful evil fey, a fey deal is in its own way just as devious as any fiendish contract. However, like fiendish contracts, there is always the hope that the price can be circumvented—a hope

which fey occasionally foster by abandoning old contracts in order to lull mortals into a false sense of security or to satisfy the fey's own compulsive need to follow its own rules to the letter.

Examples: 1. Minor Seelie fey bless a field, preventing poor harvests in exchange for a token share of the harvest as a sign of respect for the Seelie Court. 2. Sprites do the work of a cobbler for as long as he respects their embrace of poverty. 3. A daoine sidhe offers the gift of warlock magic in exchange for the completion of a long and harrowing quest using that gift. 4. A leprechaun offers desperately-needed magical handiwork in exchange for valuable heirlooms or the promise of one's firstborn child. 5. A Seelie courtier ensures health and plenty for a village in exchange for some of the children every year; mortals are terrified by the slowly accumulating number of disappearances without ever realizing that these children are being raised as faerie knights to protect their realm from aberration invaders who the courtier foresees will arrive in the next few decades.

Prophecy

Many fey, some hags, and a few dragons and giants have the gift of prophecy or skill in divination. A number do not even need magic, understanding the ebb and flow of the rivers of time well enough to make accurate guesses based on the past.

Examples: 1. A local woman has been visited by three ora prophetesses upon the birth of her son. They predict his imminent bloody death, and the mother begs the party for help averting this terrible fate. 2. A strange and sickly boy in a rural town, long suspected of being a changeling, unwittingly mutters secrets instrumental for bringing about the apocalypse as he sleeps.

Seduction

A fey lover often ruins the life of a friendly NPC, being so lovely that mere mortal lovers cannot hope to measure up. He or she also often seeks to be the sole object of a mortal's affection and/or to lure a lover into forever forsaking the mortal realms.

Examples: 1. A huldra or glaistig attempts to waylay the traveling PCs with revelry and games until nightfall, when she turns on them in a bid for carnage or enslavement. 2. A dryad becomes smitten with one of the PCs passing through her grove and attempts to seduce them; she interprets every refusal as playing hard to get.

Setting

An Otherworld locale or the lair of a Faerie creature may provide the backdrop to an otherwise unrelated conflict; the flavor of the site can then color the event without necessarily altering the substance of the encounter. Faerie's traits may well prove major hazards or boons, such as by

allowing PC or NPC spellcasters to accomplish much more than usual. Beyond the fundamental properties of a setting, it can set the tone for an encounter and encourage players to see events as they fit or clash with the Faerie backdrop.

Examples: 1. In an attempt to hunt down a rare unguent vital to curing a city's poisoned citizens, the party must find a certain draconic vendor in the shifting, chaotic markets of Amberabad in Annwn and convince her to reveal the source of her wares. 2. When cornered in his lair in a long-dead volcano, a villainous fire mage makes a last-ditch escape through a little-known portal into Annwn; to catch their foe, the party must follow quickly and not be intimidated by the Otherworld volcano's very lively, very angry state.

Spellcraft

Fey, linnorms, hags, firbolgs, and fomorians often achieve their goals by way of magic, particularly sorcery and druidry. Consequently, they often hold the knowledge of ancient and secret spells. Mortals may need to seek out their aid in researching a new spell or learning an ancient piece of magic.

Examples: 1. A city-dwelling wizard conjures a dangerous Faerie creature (such as a *cailleach bheur* or *tarn linnorm*) in order to procure magical secrets from it, but the creature escapes and causes pandemonium around the city. 2. The ancient and lonely matriarch of a venerated but nearly-extinct *daoine sidhe* clan seeks an heir worthy of inheriting her prodigious magical knowledge, which she may also use to reward those who help her achieve her desired end.

Theft

Fey and faerie dragons are apt to steal both things they desire and things they despise, the former to possess them and the latter to keep them away from their enemies. They usually employ trickery to prevent their victims from ever realizing a theft has occurred—or at least delay the realization until the fey are long gone. Sometimes, they even take the essence or soul of a thing or creature without the outer physical form, so the theft may be mistaken for illness or other misfortune.

Examples: 1. A *huldrebarn* replaces the child of the innkeeper when the party spends the night at a quiet country inn. They pass near the child several times and must notice clues that something is amiss before they leave. 2. A cadre of powerful *huldra* illusionists have strayed from Elphame to bring their unearthly revels to unwitting mortals. Although they seem too powerful to fight on even terms, they can be convinced to release their hostages and depart if any among their number can be reunited with the one mortal who truly loves her and was long ago kidnapped by a jealous rival. 3. A new *daoine*

sidhe mother sends her faerie hounds to kidnap a new mortal mother and demands she serve as wet-nurse to the fey child. If rescued, the woman carries with her a bottle of faerie ointment, which bestows the power to see through illusions. Using it might provoke fey retribution, however. 4. Lurkers in light steal the essence of a delicious dwarven feast set for a dwarven king every night just before he eats. Although it still seems delicious and nourishing, the food's substance is gone, and the king will waste away to nothing if the culprits are not caught.

Treasure-Giver

Many fey of at least moderate station or power do not consider themselves fit to fight their own battles. Perhaps they are too busy with courtly matters or wield their power only indirectly. Whatever the reason, these fey readily offer treasure consisting of great wealth or magic items (generally specializing in protection or travel magic) to those who can reach them in their otherworldly strongholds or who seem like promising champions. However, these treasures are not always what they appear. Mortals who violate the fey's morals, ethics, or desires generally find their treasure is more bane than boon. Moreover, fey rarely offer boons that are unlikely to further their overarching goals related to their bond (which may be for the greater good or ultimate sorrow, depending on the fey).

Examples: 1. A nymph, smitten by a mighty warrior, offers him a *ring of protection* +3 on the condition that he never let anyone know where he got it; when he drunkenly brags of the gift-giving fey one night in a tavern, the ring becomes a *ring of clumsiness*. 2. An adventurer seeks out a legendary fairy treasure said to be hidden beneath an ancient hut deep in a primeval forest. When he gets there, a noble leprechaun sorcerer tests his honesty in a mystic trial before allowing the proven hero claim the fortune.

Trickery

Many of the weaker fey and faerie dragons love to play tricks on hapless mortals for no reason other than to get a good laugh. Other fey employ trickery as a substitute for strength or as a way to avoid letting their foes notice their involvement in a situation.

Examples: 1. A *phooka* disguises itself as the horse of a PC or one of their allies, and at a critical moment rides off in a terrifying bucking ride through the dark wilds of Faerie. 2. Bored faerie dragons and pixies follow a band of adventurers until they make camp, then begin a raucous party involving animating the party's equipment and having it dance away with them.

A FAERIE CAMPAIGN

Some adventurers, whether of their own curious free will or by the compulsion of circumstance or magic, find themselves in Faerie for the long term or at frequent

intervals. Such a campaign may be defined by frequent exposure to standalone Faerie encounters or by something more complex and long-lasting.

A famous archetype which is reflected in many of the longer quests is the introspective journey which earns the heroes a realization about themselves which they can take back and use in the mortal realm; such a journey often appears isolated from all else in the heroes' lives, but may secretly be linked intimately to everything else. Although tales tend to reflect the realization as the real prize, such quests often also involve the acquisition of powerful boons from the Faerie world of adventure—artifacts or magical gifts—which can be taken back to mortal lands.

Faerie Allies

In such a campaign, the PCs are generally well-received by at least a few fey or giants, who serve as patrons and important NPCs. The party may offer their services, and possibly even fealty, to one or more courts; or, they may work as agents of an independently powerful or wealthy archfey, giant king, or dragon. The party is likely to be blessed with special powers by their liege, and fey can incorporate mortals into the Otherworld, granting them some of the benefits of fey magic. Blessing or seduction encounters may eventually lead to this; in unusual cases, trickery, theft, or combat challenges may as well (see **Episodic Encounters** on the previous pages).

It is important to note how Otherworldly creatures, both as individuals and as a group, view mortals, as well as the differences between mortal sensibilities and those of Faerie. For high- and epic-level parties, consider allowing the PCs to begin navigating the treacherous waters of fey politics as vassals themselves.

Possible adventures include:

- Settle a long-running feud between a group of nymphs, treants, and unicorns and the neighboring humen settlement who all depend on making heavy use of the forest's resources for their livelihoods. If convinced the mortals will serve them well, the nymphs grant the heroes their favor.
- Destroy a portal that is dangerous to the local nature and its fey guardians, such as one leading to the Depths Below. The fey guardians offer useful magic items as boons to their champions.
- A daoine sidhe's forest is endangered by cultists of Amdusius, who wish to summon this Duke of Hell in order to enslave the nature of the region to their will.
- Liberate (or raze) a great city held in thrall by an Irudyte with the aid of joystealers, splinterwaifs, and a zeitgeist who inhabit the city.
- After catching the mercurial attention of the Queen of Air and Darkness, avoid being "collected" by questing for a brachyurus pelt and presenting it to her.

- Escort a fey diplomat to meet with the high priest of a nature deity.

Faerie Enemies

In such a campaign, fey, giants, or dragons generally serve as the primary antagonists to the PCs, and there is no shortage of reasons as to how this can come about. The party could serve a deity or pantheon whose goals are contrary to the designs of a Faerie faction. One or more of the PCs themselves may have a grudge against the fey and simply seek to protect mortals from their predations. Legends of a linnorm's or fomorian's treasure may well have inspired them to seek out Faerie spoils. Perhaps they have even aligned themselves with one of the master aberration races, Lolth, another demon lord, or an entity of the Void.

Unlike some villains (such as fiends), fey can be very pragmatic in seeking their goals. Excepting a few with evil instincts (like redcaps, who live for unceasing murder), most fey care more about their bond and sometimes propagating their own vision of the world than about personal glory or harming others. They can often be negotiated with, although this is usually a difficult and dangerous venture in its own right. Fey tend to be very savvy and capricious about the ins and outs of high-stakes bargains.

Possible adventures include:

- Rescue children who were kidnapped to be playmates for a nixie.
- Secure a rare fey text of arcane secrets to help a PC or NPC to research a new spell.
- Destroy forest guardians (and the forest itself) to make way for a new settlement and farmland.
- Foil the plans of a baen nighe who plots the PCs' deaths to move along her heretofore unrelated plans for the ruination of a nearby city.
- In order to learn a nefarious lich's evil schemes, consult the region's most renowned seer, a hag sage whose experience, wisdom, and cruelty are infamous. Her divinations and insight can tell the party how to catch the lich unprepared and attack him in his home base, but only if they can reach her in her storm-wracked mountain hut and are willing to pay her price of a painful, personal sacrifice.
- Obtain an artifact hidden in an archfey's stronghold, such as the *Sword of Light*—useful for slaying powerful undead—kept by Vivienne.
- Stop the plans of an evil Unseelie Count of Plagues, who wishes to devastate a rising humen kingdom for his own political ends.
- Capture a minor Faerie Lord as an offering to alien gods.
- Discover why the Snow Queen froze an entire nation in wintry death before she does it to any other land.